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THE  
BUCHHOLZ FAMILY

SKETCHES OF BERLIN LIFE

BY  
JULIUS STINDE

*TRANSLATED, FROM THE FORTY-NINTH EDITION OF THE  
GERMAN ORIGINAL*

BY  
L. DORA SCHMITZ

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1887  
*[Authorised Translation]*



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1856  
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE immense popularity which the following sketches of Berlin life have attained in Germany (the book having in the course of two years reached a 50th edition) has led the publishers to hope that an English translation may be acceptable. There are many who have a sufficient interest in or acquaintance with Germany to care for a book which deals exclusively with its middle-class life, but whose knowledge of the language will not allow of their enjoying the author's humour in the original form. For those who find no special attraction in the subject, there is enough of keen observation and general knowledge of human nature to give the book an interest independent of its local colouring.

A translation of such local sketches must necessarily lose much of the piquancy of the original.—One peculiarity may be mentioned. The ladies almost invariably speak of one another as *die* Buchholz, *die* Bergfeldt, or use the surname alone with the feminine termination—Buchholzen, Bergfeldten ; rarely do they give one another the title of *Frau*.—It has been found necessary in the translation to give the title Frau in all cases, and we have moreover made use of the German form in preference to the English *Mrs.*, so as to

keep the fact before the reader, that he is amid Germans and German surroundings.

That the book has appealed to widely different circles in Germany may be inferred from a letter written to the author by Prince Bismarck, a translation of which we give below :

DEAR SIR,—Your having kindly sent me your book, gives me a welcome opportunity of thanking you for the pleasant intercourse I have enjoyed with the Buchholzes during the long hours of leisure which have been enforced upon me by my illness. From the subtlety of your delineations of Berlin life, and your exact reproduction of the local dialect, I—who have spent half my life in Berlin—should never have supposed but that the author was a Berliner bred and born. The discovery of my error has served only to increase my admiration of the fidelity of your pictures.—I trust that Frau Buchholz's life may yet awhile withstand the hostile attacks of Frau Bergfeldt, and that she may be induced to delight us with some further sketches.—v.  
BISMARCK.

L. D. S.

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# THE BUCHHOLZ FAMILY.

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## FROM OUTSIDE.

IN the Landsberger Strasse—which leads from the Alexander Platz to the Friedrichs-hain—situated in the north-eastern postal district of Berlin, stands a house distinguished from those on the right and left, as well as those opposite, by the fact that it has no shop windows, and that the front is decorated with a couple of pilasters. These pilasters are obviously the device of some architect who, ambitious to build something in the Grecian style, had got hold of wrong designs when making out his sketch.

However, the two pilasters, which start from the first floor, traverse the second and run up almost to the roof, give the house a certain stately appearance. It stands out favourably amid the modern houses which look like rows of barracks, and have gradually swallowed up the smaller houses of old Berlin. Small houses may still occasionally be met with in the north-eastern district, but seem only to be waiting to be pulled down. And probably they will not have to wait long, for the tram-cars, which have sounded the death-knell of so much belonging to the olden days, are already passing and ringing their bells in front of them.

The house with the mistaken Grecian pilasters will, however, probably be left standing for a time; for, when first erected, people gazed in amazement at the

large and splendid building which differed so much from the houses around it. They thought some prince or count might be coming to inhabit it. However, the grandees do not patronise the Landsberger Strasse; they keep to Unter den Linden or to the Wilhelm Strasse, where the other palaces stand and the children do not run about in wooden shoes. This was what was said of the house in days past, and now after scarcely one generation it is tolerated by modern Berlin only from the fact that it was built with a view to the future—much like the Sunday suit of a boy of thirteen is made larger than necessary, to meet the growth of arms and legs which show longer every term. The supposed princely residence is meanwhile an ordinary dwelling-house, and people coming from Alexander Platz, admiring the new station of the city line, the palatial hotel, the market, and the other new buildings which rise sky-high, will now not notice anything remarkable in walking down the Landsberger Strasse except the freak of the architect—preserved to posterity in stucco—of tattooing the face of a modern house with Greek devices.

One half of the front door, which has the customary semicircular arch, is generally open by day, and the entrance hall and the glass door leading into an open space behind, may be seen by the passers-by. The light that falls through the frosted panes of this door is of a greenish tinge in summer, for at the back of the house is a small garden where an apple-tree and some elder bushes keep up a struggle for air and light. When the smoke from the neighbouring manufactory is driven down into the garden by damp winds, it blackens the few apple-blossoms and forces its way even into the delicate petals of the elder flowers, which consequently always have a slight scent of the chimney. Every year

an endeavour is regularly made to grow a little plot of grass, but the long shoots that spring up under the trees never thrive, for those which the sparrows leave untouched the hens are sure to scrape out of the soil. After a shower of rain in May, however, when the boys are busy at the overflowing gutters in the street, sailing paper boats, or even their caps if boats are not to be had, then the little garden behind the house does really look as if Spring were a guest there. And this is saying a good deal for huge, far-reaching Berlin.

Huge and far-reaching the city has become, so huge that a single individual is lost in it. How different it is in a small town; there everybody knows everybody, if not personally at all events by sight, and if a stranger should pass through the town, every one knows at once that he is really a stranger. In Berlin any one might wander all over the place, street by street, without being noticed; he would consider it a piece of good luck to come across an acquaintance or a friend. Thousands hurry past him, they are strangers to him, he a stranger to them; strangers are his companions in the omnibuses, in the tramcars, and on the city railway. He is conscious of a feeling of loneliness even amidst the noisy traffic of the day and amidst the bustle of human beings. For solitude has its abode not only in the depths of a forest, on the ocean, or in the lonely desert, it may exist in the midst of a city of a million inhabitants as well.

And yet every house in this large city is a home for those who live there, and the street in which the house stands is a district where there are neighbours, as in a small town where people stand in some relation to one another or, at least, know each other by sight. The families in the houses have relatives and acquaintances and their own social circles just as in a small town,





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**A BIRTHDAY.**

I AM an unpretending woman, Mr. Editor, and writing is certainly not my strong point, but as your paper—which I am so fond of reading—sometimes discusses things which can only be properly understood and spoken of by women, I take the liberty, as an anxious mother, to pour out my heart to you, and beg you, when my style needs touching up, kindly so put it to rights. It would be painful to me if my daughters were to discover faults in my writing; such a thing would rob me of the authority I have hitherto exercised over them. You cannot imagine what an amount children learn at school nowadays!

But to the point.

Two Christmases ago my brother Fritz gave the children a doll's theatre as a present, and I'm sure I had nothing to say against it, for my girls are always perfectly good and quiet when they are busy with it. Even when the boy Krause comes to see them, and the three Heimreich children from the Müller Strasse, there is never any noise as long as they have the doll's theatre out. They used before always to be playing at "How do You like Your Neighbour?" or "Robber and Soldier," but this generally ended in an uproar; once even the glass door of the cupboard where my china stands was knocked in, but, thank Goodness, the china things were not damaged! My husband, therefore, from time to time gives the girls money to buy pictures to make new figures for their theatre; this is surely better than that things should get broken. The new glass door to the china press cost eight marks ready money.

Now the other day it was my Emmi's birthday, and

as usual, I asked the parents to come in too, while the children played together. We let the children have the dining-room, and after they had had their chocolate (N.B., with a due allowance of cake) they set up their doll's theatre, and had arranged chairs in front of the show like a real theatre. The little boy Krause then came in to the best room, where we elderly folks were sitting, and asked us to come and see the play, and to please the children we went in. We ladies sat down at once right in front, the gentlemen stood against the wall, for to have the plush chairs dragged in from the best room was a thing I would not hear of.

When we were seated and waiting for the play to begin, Frau Heimreich said to me that, upon the whole, she did not approve of children amusing themselves with acting, as it made them too fanciful. I replied: "On the contrary, I consider that it is a good training for heart and mind, and is a better occupation than making an uproar, when glass doors are apt to get knocked in." She had the worst of it there, for it was her daughter Agnes who had caused the accident to my glass door, so of course she made no further remark.

At last the curtain went up. Uncle Fritz began to clap before a word had been uttered; perhaps he thought himself at the Victoria, where the decorations generally get the better part of the applause. There was, however, nothing of that sort to applaud here, for the scenery represented a simple room, which no one could have considered in any way remarkable. But Uncle Fritz always imagines himself a greater connoisseur than anybody else.

The children now began to say their parts. My Emmi pushed one of the female dolls on to the stage and said quite audibly:

"Good-morning, ladies. Nay, but I must pour out

my heart to you. Fancy ! Rosalie, that frivolous creature, is now making love to my sergeant !”

“This is a pretty beginning !” said Frau Heimreich to me in a whisper. “What’s the use of weighing every word in a goldsmith’s scales ?” was my reply. I felt a little uncomfortable, it is true, but I was not going to allow Frau Heimreich to notice any weakness in me.

The children continued, and Emmi went on to say : “There’s not one good point about that girl. Did she not try to set your lovers against you, the wretched thing ?” “Yes, she did, yes, she did !” exclaimed the other children in chorus, and moved the puppets about on their wires as if they had spoken. Even the boy Krause joined in, and was consequently told to move off from the theatre ; he came crying from behind the bed-screen which the children had placed by the side of the theatre so that they might not be seen.

“It’s getting rather lively, it seems to me,” said Frau Heimreich, in a pretty loud voice. I pretended not to understand what she meant, and therefore called to little Krause : “Come here, Edward ; you can see the play best of all from here.” Whereupon Frau Heimreich observed sharply : “It would be just as well that the child didn’t see anything of a play like this.” I said nothing. There then appeared on the stage two dolls, who spoke of being secretly married, of having a son, of whom the parents knew nothing, and other such objectionable improprieties. After this an old wretch appeared, wanting to make love to Rosalie, and had with him two bottles of champagne, upon each of which he had stuck a ten-thaler note. Frau Heimreich kept on making incessant spiteful remarks. “All this is doubtless to improve heart and mind ; it is surely better that panes of glass should be broken than young souls injured.” I could not let her fancy herself right :

probably I ought to have done so, but she was too impertinent, so I merely said: "Such things as the children are acting occur often enough in life!" "That's not my experience," she retorted. I might have agreed with her here and there, but I was not going to allow her to think herself right, so I replied: "If people choose to be blind and deaf, of course they will never see or hear anything that goes on round about them!" Fortunately the curtain fell as I finished speaking, and the first act was over. Uncle Fritz and the boy Krause were the only persons who applauded; I clapped too, but, of course, only to show Frau Heimreich that I had paid no heed to her chatter.

The second act then began. An infant was exposed—Rosalie finds it, and a man tells her to her face that it is hers. "I am a dressmaker's young lady; how should it belong to me?" exclaims my Emmi, who was taking the part of Rosalie.

I had once or twice felt as if hot and cold water were running down my back in turns, but this last bit was too much even for me. "Come, let there be an end to this play;" I cried, "this is going far beyond a joke!" With this I rose hurriedly from my chair, Frau Heimreich meanwhile exclaiming: "Your children do certainly learn charming pieces! Ha, ha! Heart and mind are indeed taken into good consideration, that I must say!" Whereupon she called out: "Agnes, Paula and Martha, come here at once; you shall have nothing more to do with such proceedings! We are a respectable family; your grandfather, my late lamented father, received the decoration of the Red Eagle!" "But only of the fourth grade," I exclaimed. For whenever she has a chance she makes a boast of that decoration.

The children now came out from behind the bed-screen with disappointed faces. My girls were crying

bitterly, and the child Krause made a regular hullabaloo. And truly the festival had come to a very woeful end. "What have we done, that you are so angry, Mamma?" sobbed Emmi. "What?" said I, "how can you act such stupid stuff?"—"Stupid stuff, only, do you call it?" exclaimed Frau Heimreich.—"Where did you get the piece from?" I asked.—"From the bookseller," answered Emmi, and brought me a little book called 'A Frivolous Young Person; a farce in three acts by Büttner and Pohl, arranged for children by Dr. Sperzius.'—"He must be a pretty doctor, that Spuzius or Sperenzius," exclaimed Frau Heimreich; "he ought to be ashamed of himself!"—Uncle Fritz now joined the discussion, and said: "It's a very good farce, and has been given hundreds of times on the stage."—"Very likely," said I, "a farce fit only for men; but because it pleases bachelors like you, it does not follow that it is good. Carl, I hope you never went to see it," I added, addressing my husband; but he did not remember whether he had or hadn't.

Frau Heimreich then began again, and maintained that I, as a mother, ought not to allow such books in my house; whereupon I declared that I had too much to do, to attend to such matters, and further made the remark, that when people called upon me, they should leave their cards and not write their names in the dust on the furniture. One word led to another, and she left saying that she would never come again, and also, that she would never again allow her children to enter such a Gomorrah as our house was. I did not mind all this very much, for my two girls are, in reality, too big now to associate with the three youngest Heimreichs, and although Frau Heimreich boasts of her morals, I am pretty certain she is pious only when in church of a Sunday.

Our children cried dreadfully when the Heimreichs went away. I gave them chocolate and cake, although I knew that they had had enough only a short time before; but children can always make room for such things, and this was lucky for me at that moment, for, at all events, it made them quiet. We had been on friendly terms with the Heimreichs for some time, it is true, but "wilful must, as wilful wills," you know—she wished it so, and there's an end of it. Moreover, the Heimreichs live away in the Müller Strasse, a terrible way off. The Krauses remained, and when we had returned to the best sitting-room, our conversation, of course, went back to that wretched book which had caused so much mischief. Herr Krause declared that it was unpardonable to let children get such things into their hands. Uncle Fritz replied, that children were far too stupid to know what it was all really about. "Small children become big ones!" said my husband, whereupon Frau Krause added: "And youthful impressions last for a lifetime." I said that the children might of course have acted 'Snow-flake,' 'Rübezahl,' or some such story, and was surprised that so objectionable a play as 'A Frivolous Young Person' should ever have fallen into their hands.

Uncle Fritz declared that we ought to have quietly allowed the children to play out the piece, that this would have been better than making such an unnecessary fuss about it. But I gave him a bit of my mind, pretty hotly, for he is my youngest brother, and I finished up by saying that his stupid theatre was at the bottom of the whole mischief. He, however, declared the bookseller to blame, and Dr. Spenzenius, or whatever his name might be. In fact we were all of us out of humour.

Now I ask you, Mr. Editor, is it right that publishers



and booksellers should be allowed to sell books under the innocent title of "plays for children," when these plays are as unfit for them as anything can possibly be? Is there any sanitary board for dealing with the adulteration of mental food?

The birthday festival had certainly been altogether spoiled. Frau Heimreich was partly to blame, to be sure; yet this much I have learned, that ever after this, the books my two girls get to read shall come under my own and my husband's inspection first, for I will not again have the paradise of their childhood entered by such poisonous vipers. The Krauses think exactly as I do about the matter, and perhaps there are other families who would agree with us, when they hear of our experiences. You, Mr. Editor, are not a mother, to be sure, but I do hope you will support me in what I have stated.

I am, yours faithfully,

WILHELMINE BUCHHOLZ, *née* FABIAN.

P.S. I send you the book, and you will observe that I have not mentioned the worst passages.

---

#### A MUSICAL BETROTHAL-PARTY.

You were kind enough, dear Sir, to print for me an account of that terrible fuss, on my Emmi's birthday, when the children acted that horrible play in their doll's theatre, and I was so annoyed with Frau Heimreich. She has never been at our house since, but Frau Krause, who lives close by, and is a very sensible woman, thinks as I do, that it would be lowering myself to take the first step.

You must now allow me to tell you of a surprise I had the other day. Well, I was sitting thinking ab-

solutely about nothing, when the house-bell rang and the postman came in and handed me a money order. At first I wouldn't believe the order was for me, but I was obliged to sign the paper, and the man then put down the gold pieces on the table and went away. I found out that the money came as a payment for the letter I had written to you. Now really I had never expected such a thing, and then what an amount! I was quite overcome, and could not help crying, and the girls cried too. The money lay there on the table; it seemed to me as though it might vanish any moment if I touched it, and I could have fancied that the postman had been a spirit from fairyland, had he not left pretty visible signs of his footmarks on the floor.

My husband said to me: "Wilhelmine, I am really proud of you, for you have earned all that as an authoress!" "Carl," said I to him, "I have perhaps sometimes been a little hard upon you, but it shall never happen again; no, certainly never again, dear." He threw his arms round me and kissed me, and I could not help beginning to cry again. Emmi and Betti clung about me, seeing me still unconsolated, and dried their own tears. "Now, have done, children," I said coaxingly, "it's only joy that's making me cry." I could not help thinking, "If only Frau Heimreich could see all this, how envious she would be!"

"What shall you do with all that money, Wilhelmine?" said my husband. "I shall keep it as an everlasting remembrance," I replied, "or if it can't be otherwise, I shall buy myself a new bonnet; my old one is altogether out of fashion. Frau Krause has just bought herself a new one." The children thought it best I should buy a new bonnet, so I gave in to their clamouring, and we all three went straight off to our bonnet shop. But as there was a nice bit of money

over, I said to them : "With this we will all go and spend a happy day together somewhere. What do you say to going to Bilse's concert-room? I will put on my new bonnet, and father shall come and fetch us home!"

The children's delight knew no bounds, and on our way home we turned in at the confectioner's and had chocolate with whipped cream on the top, and also something good to nibble at. It was delicious!

In the evening we set out early so as to get good places at Bilse's. When we entered the hall, I saw a friend of mine sitting at one of the tables. We exchanged salutations and I said : "Good-evening, Frau Bergfeldt, I am glad that we should have met. How Augusta has grown since I last saw her!" Frau Bergfeldt clearly thought too that her daughter had improved. I soon saw, however, that it was only her dress that made Augusta seem to have grown ; it was made in the latest fashion with a train and cuirass bodice, and her hair was combed down over her forehead like a pony's mane. In *my* daughter I would not have put up with such things, although Betti would have looked quite as well in that style of dress. Augusta has been confirmed two years ago, it is true, but is nevertheless still so thin and awkward, it seems a crying shame to dress her like a grown-up person. Girls that have such skinny elbows had certainly better wear long sleeves.

We took seats at their table, but when Emmi was about to sit down beside Augusta, Frau Bergfeldt said the chair was engaged, as Emil was coming later. I said : "But there are two empty chairs, surely Emil can't want more than one!" Whereupon she replied, somewhat embarrassed, that Emil was going to bring a friend with him. "Aha," thought I to myself, "there's something in the wind here. I shall watch."

And not long afterwards Emil did come sure enough and with him a friend, who, as I gathered later, is a law-student like Emil, and had still a couple of years' study before him. Just as I had expected, the friend sat down on the chair beside Augusta, who coloured up to her eyes and behaved more awkwardly even than she had done before. Emil took his seat beside Betti, and thus our table was full.

The concert began, and the musicians had scarcely begun to play when Frau Bergfeldt drew a stocking out of her pocket, and began knitting so busily one would have thought she meant to earn back the money she had paid for her entrance. While the music was slow and solemn she knitted away quietly, but when a valse struck up, the rhythm seemed to get into her fingers and she let so many stitches drop that Augusta had afterwards to undo all she had done ; this explained to me why the knitted part had lost its whiteness.

No one can be more in favour of industry at home than I am, for I detest to see folks idle ; but when one goes to a concert to improve one's mind, it is ridiculous to try to divide one's attention between a symphony and a stocking. Moreover, I don't believe that Beethoven wrote those heavenly compositions of his, simply that people might knit while they were being played. And how grand those symphonies are ! When everybody sits there as if plunged four cellar-stairs deep in thought, one fancies that nothing could rouse them up but a good sousing with cold water. But that's the power of music !

Between the parts we chatted away pleasantly. Emil began an interesting conversation with Betti about German literature, and as she had only shortly before been reading one of Marlitt's novels, she had something to say for herself. She thought too that Marlitt described

her characters splendidly, and considered it perfectly right that the baron was shot, and that the brave and manly engineer should marry the countess. When children have been taught something, they can afterwards put in a word themselves nicely.

Augusta Bergfeldt and the law-student scarcely uttered a syllable, but every now and again they looked sideways at each other in a loving way, and that language was plain enough. Frau Bergfeldt pretended that she did not notice anything; she always addressed the young man as "dear Herr Weigelt," and asked him what he was doing, how his parents were, and why he did not wear the mittens which Augusta had worked for him. "You no doubt want to keep the young man warm by giving him mittens as a present," I whispered to her, without meaning any mischief by the joke. But she cast a spiteful glance at my new bonnet and said: "We go in more for what is useful, not for flimsiness and trumpery." I was speechless! To have my new bonnet called trumpery! If I had borrowed it, or had tormented Carl for the money for it, it might have been a different matter. When I had recovered myself, I replied: "When a husband has to earn all the money by himself, it *is* wrong for a wife to follow the fashions too much." That was a pretty good hit at her!

During the second part we ate the cakes I had brought with me; the two young gentlemen lit their cigars, and the more beautiful the music became, the closer drew the chairs of Augusta and young Weigelt. I did not say anything further, but noticed that when the band played a pot-pourri of very affecting music bringing in the air "Oh, that thou wert my own," the two were sitting hand in hand, looking at each other sentimentally.

The concert at last came to an end; Carl and Herr

Bergfeldt were waiting for us at the entrance, and we then proceeded to a restaurant, where we engaged a room for ourselves, to be more comfortable. Carl had told Herr Bergfeldt how I had got my new bonnet, and he congratulated me and said that he now classed me among German authoresses. His wife, however, remarked—and I am sure she spoke out of pure envy—“that ladies who took to their pen never troubled themselves much about domestic matters.”—“Indeed,” said I; “at all events, I trouble myself more about my girls than you do about yours. I should never allow one of mine to go flirting with a student as your Augusta does.” I can tell you, my words fell like a bomb among them, and made Herr Bergfeldt exclaim: “What’s that you say? Herr Weigelt, I trust you are not . . . .” “Oh, Goodness, Papa!” cried Augusta. “Franz means it all in earnest!” exclaimed Frau Bergfeldt. “Who’s Franz?” asked the father vehemently. “It’s Herr Weigelt,” replied his wife. “He loves Augusta faithfully and deeply . . . .”

“I must beg a word with you, sir, about all this,” said Herr Bergfeldt, addressing young Weigelt, who stood there with a face the colour of confiscated milk; and, my Goodness, how he did quake! Just like one of those new-fangled electric bells. One really could not help pitying him.

“Who are you?” inquired the father.—“I’m a law-student,” he replied.—“Where did you become acquainted with my daughter?”—“At Bilse’s concert-room.”—“And they are so much in love with each other!” exclaimed Frau Bergfeldt.—“Oh, we are, Papa!” cried Augusta in tears.—“But you are too young a fellow to think of marrying, and a father is not likely to give away his daughter so long beforehand.”—“Oh, Papa, you will break my heart!” sobbed

Augusta ; “ Franz is so good ! ” — “ Do you wish to make our child unhappy ? ” put in the mother.

Young Weigelt stood before the father like a criminal awaiting his sentence, and didn't seem able to utter a word. “ Will you promise to consider my child's happiness ? ” said Herr Bergfeldt, addressing him. “ Will you promise me to be industrious, to pass your examinations, to live steadily, and to—oh, my child, my eldest, my firstborn . . . ! ” He could not go on, and Augusta too was dissolved in tears, and when the mother then quickly placed the young people's hands in one another and said “ Bless you, my children, ” they were both in tears. And indeed it was a very affecting moment. My own eyes were full of tears, still I could not help quietly saying to myself that the engagement had, at any rate, been far too hastily made. He can't keep himself yet ; and she with her skinny elbows—he will be astonished when he sees them !

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Well, the betrothal was celebrated in all quietness, and we determined not to mention a syllable about it, till young Weigelt had passed his examinations. Yet how can an engagement be kept quiet ? First of all the washerwoman gets to hear of it, and before a week is out the news has spread round the whole circle of one's acquaintance ; that I know by experience, for it was the same when I was engaged to Carl—my father wished

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Owing to Herr Bergfeldt being very monosyllabic, we did not stay long. He found fault with everything, even with what pleased us. This behaviour of his made upon the attendants the impression that we were very genteel folks, and this was one good thing. On our way home I asked Carl if he had not noticed that young Weigelt had a very dazed kind of look, that is to say, looked as if he himself had fancied the engagement had been hurried on a little too quickly. Carl thought the young fellow must be a ninny, otherwise he would not have allowed himself to be so bamboozled ; for it was quite clear that the mother had managed the matter, and that she had taken the girl to Bilse's in order to show her off, not for the music. He added that he wouldn't like me to take our girls to such places without him.

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22 *A Receipt for making Things Medieval.*

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Stinde, Julius Ernst Wilhelm, 1841-1900.  
The Bueckels family; sketches of Berlin life, by Julius  
Stinde; translated from ... the German ... by L. Dora Schmitz.  
New York, G. Scribner's sons, 1888-87  
3 v. 289<sup>pp</sup>.

Vol. 1 translated from the 4th edition and v. 2 from the 4th edition  
of the original.

L. Schmitz, L. Dora, tr. n. Titik.  
Library of Congress  
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Among the nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand visitors who passed the turnstiles before the fortunate millionth individual arrived, was the Buchholz family, as we learn from a letter of Frau Buchholz, and this letter also accounts for her long silence. She is perhaps the only person whose remembrance of the Exhibition may be said to have not been altogether pleasant. There are people, however, who seem to like to meet vexation half-way, in place of avoiding it. That our lady-friend should have come in for so much vexation at the Exhibition cannot, after careful consideration, be laid to the account of the Committee of Management.

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#### AT THE EXHIBITION.

You have no doubt wondered, dear Sir, why I have lately given no sign of myself, for, as you know, I do every now and then take up my pen. But I would ask you, could I be expected to write when I was suffering from so bad an attack of bilious-fever that a doctor had to be called in ; and afterwards, too, while fastening up some curtains, I accidentally ran a pin so deep into my finger, one would have supposed I had neither nerves

nor feeling. No, Sir, I am sure that even you could not have written anything under such circumstances.

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moreover sent a message that the handle of the pan had been broken when she got it from me. Now this was a downright untruth, and the wickedness of it upset me altogether.

That's what gave me the bilious-fever. If Frau Bergfeldt can justify herself to her Maker for having acted by me as she did, well and good ; but I hope I may not meet her face—she would get a bit of my mind and no mistake, for there is nothing in my house but what is whole and in order.

When I had gradually recovered from my illness, and my complexion had lost the hideous yellow colour which my worry had brought upon me, Carl one day said to me : "Wilhelmine, what do you say to having a little outing? I think it would be a capital plan if we were all to go to the Exhibition together, you and I and the children. I don't mind spending something in celebrating your return to health." At the first moment I was delighted at this proposal, but then could not help fancying that Carl's affectionate behaviour towards me arose from a secret consciousness of guilt on his part, which Frau Bergfeldt's letter had recalled to his mind. However, I did not say a word about this thought having struck me, and agreed willingly to what he proposed. The girls had just had their summer dresses made, and as Carl had promised me a new Japanese shawl, there was of course nothing to prevent our going. But had I known what was before me I should certainly never have stirred from the house.

I will not trouble you with a description of the Exhibition, I should really need to be a professional writer for that ; so I will only remark that the impression made upon me, as well as upon the children, was an overpowering one. Carl, who had been to see it several

times, struck me as rather indifferent to its splendour, both generally and in detail.

It was a very hot day, so Carl offered to let us have some little refreshment at the Moabite beer-house, and we did not say nay to that. Carl went to fetch the beer himself, and walked straight up to a fat Bavarian who was drawing the stuff from a gigantic barrel. I thought to myself how gallant and good that Carl of mine is, what a truly admirable husband, when my eyes caught sight of a Munich barmaid, in her gay, fantastic costume, who was handing him the change and smiling at him as if he were an old acquaintance.

That smile struck me to the heart, but not a word did I say; in my own mind, however, I resolved never to let him go to the Exhibition again alone—most firmly did I vow that to myself!

The beer tasted like wormwood to me, which cannot be wondered at considering the circumstances. I could not drink it, and so gave it to the children that it might not be wasted.

Carl said to me: "You do not seem to like the beer, Wilhelmine; shall we try some lighter kind?"—"The sun is too hot here," I replied, casting a glance at the barmaid, but Carl did not or would not understand what I meant. "Very well, let us go to the Bohemian brewery," was his answer. I was glad to get away, and we sauntered along to the Bohemian bar. There, to our great joy, we met not only Uncle Fritz, but also Dr. Wrenzchen, the doctor who had attended me when Frau Bergfeldt's shameful behaviour threw me upon my sick-bed. It was very pleasant meeting him, for, to a patient, a doctor does always seem a kind of supernatural being, a very angel of comfort, especially when he is kind and gentle, and knows how to cheer up a suffering fellow-creature with a neat little joke every

now and again. Well, we soon got chatting very pleasantly. Carl and Fritz meanwhile began discussing which was the best beer, my husband having said that I seemed to prefer the Bohemian to the Moabite. But then he didn't know what good reasons I had for liking it best.

The one declared this, the other that, so, as they couldn't agree, Uncle Fritz was wicked enough to propose a beer wager, which Carl took up, in spite of a significant cough from me, and which the doctor meant keep out of. I then remarked that it was high time we saw something of the Exhibition. Carl, however, declared that he must go the round of the beers with Fritz so as to settle the wager, and that therefore I had better go alone with the children. He further said that he and Fritz would meet us in the Old German wine-room at five o'clock. The doctor offered to accompany me and the girls, for, as he said, he was just then taking Marienbad waters at home for his stoutness, and therefore would have to forego the pleasure of the beer-tasting trip. Carl put on a face as innocent as if he had only just been confirmed.

I saw through him, however, although I said nothing at the time, for I did not want the doctor to notice that our domestic happiness was disturbed and likely to collapse altogether; moreover, Betti had taken rather a fancy to him, and Emil Bergfeldt is after all no proper match for her. That letter of his mother's and the broken stew-pan were enough to separate us for ever from that family. And then, a doctor in the family would be so very convenient; he could not, of course, charge his relatives for every little, trifling bit of advice. All I said to Carl on parting was: "Now, Carl, remember, and keep to one sort; you know you can't stand taking a lot of different kinds."

The doctor then led us through the Exhibition. It was really wonderful how he explained everything. Betti was quite overcome with amazement, in fact I had more than once to whisper to her: "Don't stand with your mouth wide open like that, you look too ridiculous." When passing the furnished rooms, I made the remark that middle-class folk could never afford such luxuries, whereupon the good doctor said: "The smallest of rooms is big enough for a happy, loving couple!"—"Do you hear, Betti," said I, "what excellent ideas the doctor has about life?" But instead of making any sensible reply—and yet we subscribe to the 'Gartenlaube' magazine—she suddenly shut her mouth with a click, for it was open again, and my speaking to her made her think that I was again about to give her a motherly rebuke. To make up for the girl's stupidity, I said knowingly: "Betti is so overcome by all these productions of the busy human mind in industry and art, that she did not hear your excellent remark, dear Doctor."

"Don't mention it, madam," said he, kind as ever; "it's only external." I tapped him gently on the arm with my fan, which served me in place of a parasol that day, and tried to take up the thread of our conversation again by saying: "Quite right, Doctor; the main thing is, after all, that there should be a harmony of hearts." He looked at me sideways a little, and seemed to wink with his one eye, and I was just about telling him what Betti would have at her marriage, and that there would be something more when we came into the money which my aunt in Bützow was to leave us, when Emmi all of a sudden exclaimed aloud: "Oh, look, Mamma, how bright that bath is, and water is actually running into it!"

Although she is my own flesh and blood, I could at

that moment have done her some injury, for that senseless exclamation put an untimely end to a conversation upon which her sister's happiness depended. How pleasant it would have been had Betti and the doctor left the Exhibition that afternoon an engaged couple, and how it would have vexed the Bergfeldts. For if a doctor with a practice were to be weighed against an ill-fed law-student, the latter would prove by far the lighter of the two surely. But now the conversation was broken off once and for ever, and could not be taken up again; in face of a bath, love affairs could surely not be discussed, at least such a thing would go against my feelings. The right moment was clearly lost. I cannot, of course, get ill again simply to have the doctor about me, and he is not likely to come of his own accord. All I could now do was to count upon the walk home.

The doctor looked at his watch and said it was time to go to the wine-room, where we had appointed to meet my husband and Uncle Fritz, and so away we went. But, oh, that bath! I gave it such a look at parting that verily it would have blistered had it not been of the best workmanship; might it not be said that in it lay buried the happiness of my eldest child!

We had to pass through the spirit department, where the exhibitors invited us most pressinglly to taste their samples free of charge, and the doctor actually induced us to try a little of one of the ladies' liqueurs. Just as I was about to express my thanks for this civility, I caught sight of Carl, who was having some stuff poured out for him and seemed to be tasting several kinds of brandy. I went up to him and said: "Carl, do you call this waiting for us?" "Well, well," he said, and laughed, "that at the Moabite is the best after all."—"Have you been there again?" I asked.

"Of course, my darling," said he, chucking me under the chin.—"Carl," said I severely, "you have been drinking too many sorts."—"I've not had enough yet though," said he cheerily.—"Where is Uncle Fritz?"—"Oh, the muff! He wouldn't even come to the liqueurs. I haven't a notion where he is."

"Doctor," said I, "do take my husband by the arm, so that the children may not notice anything; he has but a poor stomach."

"Oh, it's only external," replied the doctor, taking hold of Carl and drawing him away.

It was most kind of Dr. Wrenzchen taking so much trouble with my husband, and trying to make him take some interest in the Exhibition, in spite of Carl always wanting to get back to the liqueur-stall and maintaining that he had not tried all the different sorts. However, the doctor held him firmly by the arm, and when we were passing the surgical department which was close to the liqueurs, he began telling him what all the different knives and saws, the cauterisers and probes were used for, and also made him look at the artificial legs and arms.

"Oh, how much misery there is in the world!" exclaimed Carl. "Unhappy mortals! Children, thank Heaven your limbs are sound. Ah, poor suffering humanity, what an amount of misery this makes one think of!"

As he was lamenting thus, some one at the moment struck up on the organ close by *Dies ist der Tag des Herrn*. This brought things to a climax. Carl's feelings so overcame him that he began to sob violently, and kept exclaiming—"Children, thank Heaven! Yes, we need all do that!" And with this he sank down on a chair crying bitterly.

When the children heard and saw all this they were



frightened and horror-struck. "Oh, Goodness! what is the matter with papa," shrieked Emmi. "Oh, Papa, dear Papa!" cried Betti. People gathered round us, and among the crowd whom should I see but Frau Bergfeldt with Augusta, and that gaunt, miserable-looking student of hers! I felt as if the heavens were coming down upon me. "Children," I cried, "stand in front of your father; this is no sight for persons without feeling and culture."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said good Dr. Wrenzchen, "I beg you to move on—this gentleman is feeling a little ill from the great heat; he will soon be all right again." And the people did move away, only the woman Bergfeldt kept standing where she was. "Heat?" she called out in a scoffing tone of voice, "it's more likely he hasn't had anything proper to eat; when a wife takes to writing, the husband has to suffer for it. Come, Augusta and Franz, we are to have chicken and asparagus for supper this evening." I was speechless. The Bergfeldts with asparagus! Good heavens! a few heads, maybe, as a treat at Whitsuntide, but only then surely! Asparagus? I would have liked to choke her with that lump of cyankali which we had just been admiring, because, as we were told, it was strong enough to poison all the inhabitants of Berlin, Charlottenburg and Rixdorf put together—yes, at that moment I would willingly have stuffed it down her throat. The organ meanwhile was playing away, and Carl jabbering on about the miseries of poor, suffering humanity.

When he became a little more pacified I drove him home; the girls remained with the doctor for the concert. At first I did not wish to accept his offer to be their cavalier, but I gave in, especially as he seemed to wink at me in rather a knowing way. When we got home I gave Carl a pretty talking to, and he was quite

crestfallen. "Dearest Wilhelmine, I will never again touch a liqueur." "And will you never again allow yourself to be tempted by Fritz to go in for a beer wager?"—"No."—"And never again go flirting with that Bavarian barmaid?"—"Now, Mina dear."—"Well then, with no barmaid whatever?"—"How can you say such things?"—"And will you go and inform against that Frau Bergfeldt for her insulting language to me?"—"I will do anything and everything you wish, dear, but cannot do as you wish about Frau Bergfeldt."—"So you mean to allow her to go on at me like a rattlesnake?"—"There is nothing to accuse her of."

I saw clearly there was something wrong and therefore said: "Carl, do tell me what all this means, for my happiness and that of our children is at stake. What is it that Frau Bergfeldt knows about you?"

When I had got him meek enough, he made his confession; it was this:—Once, long ago, when he and Bergfeldt were still young fellows and full of youthful spirits, they had celebrated a birthday together, and at night had kicked up a row with one of the watchmen, which ended in their both being carried off to the guard-house; unfortunately, as it was late on a Saturday night, they had to remain there till Monday morning.—"Is that all," said I, "and she fancies she could brew mischief with that! Why that's nothing at all, Carl; to my mind it needs a good bit of courage to attack a watchman, and in courage you've never been wanting. It's only drinking different sorts of things together that you can't stand." He then promised me to be careful in future, and I know him well enough to know that he will keep his word.

I then made him a strong cup of coffee and determined in my own mind not only to forget all that had happened, but to be very forbearing, for, after all, he

was only an innocent led astray. He praised my coffee too, and said that it would do him good, as he was feeling really very unwell. I went up to him full of pity and was about to stroke his poor suffering head, when he suddenly ducked down as if afraid of me.—“Carl,” I exclaimed, “what did you think I was going to do to you? Surely, you don’t suppose I would raise my hand against you?”—“It did look rather like it,” he answered, “but, Mina dear, don’t be angry, for my nerves are quite upset.”—“By that beer and the liqueurs,” said I.—“Very possibly,” he said quietly, “but dear, do me the favour not to talk much more; I really cannot stand it.”

The girls did not return till Carl was in bed, for he had retired earlier than usual. When they came in I asked them how they had enjoyed themselves. “Very much,” said Emmi; “and the doctor kept winking with one eye all the time.”

“Did he really, Betti, my darling child?”

“Yes, Mamma, the whole evening.”

“And what did he say to you?” I asked, full of curiosity.

“He said that he was probably getting a sty in his eye,” cried Emmi; “and that he had felt it all the afternoon.”

“Well, well,” said I, “a doctor must know that best.” Later in the evening I learned that it was Fritz who had played the organ at the Exhibition, that so upset Carl. He got it pretty hotly from me for his trouble!

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**HERR BUCHHOLZ SUFFERS FROM TOOTH-ACHE.**

A WEEK ago we celebrated our wedding-day—it was one of the most abominable days I ever remember. This anniversary to me, otherwise, is the happiest fête of all the year, more than Easter or Whitsuntide put together, for it is my special day, and moreover Carl is the patron saint of the day. It might be asked why the day isn't a special day for Carl as well. Of course it may be, but then, how can I tell whether I have made him as happy as he has made me? I can only hope I have; yet I cannot imagine that any mortal soul could ever have been as happy as I was that first wedding-day when he gave me his name, and before God and all the people in the church proclaimed his love for me aloud and publicly. I remember I couldn't get that one word "yes" to cross my lips; I felt frightened at seeing the great number of people, and yet I could have shouted for joy.

So when our wedding-day comes round, that first day rises up vividly in my remembrance as if it had only been yesterday; and when Carl embraces me, with never a word, and gives me a kiss, I feel as if he were still my bridegroom, with the sprig of myrtle in his buttonhole, a white necktie, and beautifully dressed hair; yet nowadays I have him only in a dressing-gown, and his hair is apt to be tousled early of a morning.

In the evening we always have a small gathering of friends and acquaintances, and something extra good for supper. Carl is not one to despise his food, and I'm glad when he finds things tasty. On this particular occasion he hardly touched anything, and I was uneasy about him.

"Is anything the matter, Carl!" I asked.

"Oh, no!" he said, but I noticed that his "oh" was drawn out half the length of the Friedrich Strasse. I begged him to tell me what ailed him, but he persistently refused to answer any questions, and, in fact, was, I may say, a little unpleasant towards me.

Our last visitors did not leave till half-past one o'clock. When we were alone I could not help complaining of his behaviour during the evening, whereupon he said that he had toothache, and hadn't been in the humour to enjoy himself. I proposed that he should have a handkerchief tied up his head, but he ridiculed this and said the pain was not much and would probably go off by itself.

So I went into the kitchen to pay the charwoman, who generally comes in to help when we have friends. I let a word or two drop about my husband having the toothache, whereupon old Grunert—that's to say, the charwoman—said she knew of an excellent sympathetic remedy which had cured numbers of people.

I thought at once, why should we not give it a trial, for sympathy is, at all events, wonderfully cheap.

Carl pooh-poohed the idea of old Grunert's remedy, but I persuaded him to try it, as sympathy could surely do him no harm. He at last consented to let her try her hand.

Grunert knew that we had an elder-tree in the garden that would suit her purpose, so she went out quietly and cut a small piece off one of the branches; on returning she poked this bit of wood round and round in Carl's decayed tooth till it bled. All this was done without a word being spoken. Then she went out again to the tree and tied the bit of wood with a linen thread on to the place from which she had cut it, and then came in and asked if the pain had gone.

“Is that what you expected?” exclaimed Carl, annoyed. “My tooth aches much worse since you worried it with that bit of wood.” But Grunert merely said, just let him wait till the wood has grown on to the tree again, the pain will vanish in a moment. After wishing that he might very soon be better, she went away home.

Carl grumbled dreadfully about her nonsense, especially as the toothache had become more violent since the sympathetic remedy had been applied.

I suggested that he should try holding warm water in his mouth, which is said to be a good thing, and went into the kitchen to get a little heated.

“Well, ma’am,” said our cook to me, “when I’ve the toothache I use spirit of mustard-seed and rub it on my cheek ; it burns a bit, but it does good.” Luckily she had a little of the spirit, which I gratefully accepted, and applied it to Carl’s cheek.

I soon wished I hadn’t, for the stuff really seemed terribly hot and strong; Carl said his face felt as if it had been painted with some hellish fire. His cheek became as red as a boiled lobster and soon afterwards got very swollen. Then, of course, he was obliged to have his head tied up, which is what ought to have been done at the outset if only he had followed my advice. But men are always so obstinate, even when things are suggested for their good.

What with the sympathetic remedy and the spirit of mustard-seed, it was now nearly three in the morning, and we went to bed.

I cannot say I had a pleasant night, for Carl scarcely slept at all, and kept turning over and over in his bed. The next morning he certainly looked as if he might have done better.

Towards eight o’clock he fell asleep, and I began to

hope that all would soon be well. At ten the Police-  
lieutenant's wife came in with her congratulations for  
our wedding-day, which she regretted came rather late.  
She was sincerely grieved about my husband, and said  
there was nothing better for toothache than genuine  
Chinese essence of poho. Our servant was sent out at  
once to fetch some. Carl had woke up meanwhile and  
was suffering dreadfully again. I showed him the es-  
sence we had procured, but he refused to try it.

"Carl," I said, "it would be most rude to the Police-  
lieutenant's wife if you were not to give the expensive  
stuff a trial." However, he would not listen to any-  
thing, and was very much out of temper. When I re-  
minded him that the Chinese had proved themselves  
wiser than we were in many things, he at last agreed  
to try it, and I pushed a bit of wadding well saturated  
with the poho into his tooth.

It made him spit dreadfully, but the pain vanished.  
His eyes were full of tears from the strength of the  
essence, but he smiled as well as he could with his  
swollen cheek. Poor Carl! How grateful I felt to  
the Police-lieutenant's wife no one can imagine. I and  
the girls accompanied her downstairs, and she herself  
was pleased that her advice had proved so successful.  
When I returned upstairs I heard poor Carl moaning  
again—the toothache had returned with redoubled  
violence.

It is a good thing to have quick-witted children. It  
now occurred to Betti that Herr Krause had homœo-  
pathic medicines, and often cured complaints in no  
time, so away she ran to ask him to look in.

Herr Krause is a teacher, and one can always rely  
upon such persons, for they really know everything,  
and lay the foundation for everything—in fact, it is said  
it was they who won in the late war, although, of

course, there never would have been a war but for them. Moreover, Herr Krause is specially well up in scientific matters, and has absolutely no faith whatever in medical men. And, as I said before, I myself prefer home remedies.

Herr Krause lost no time in appearing with his medicine-case and his book, for was this not a case of succouring a suffering fellow-creature, and an act of pure humanity? Carl was sitting on the sofa with his swollen cheek and was very irritable, yet, as he could only see with one eye, the other being pretty well swollen up, he looked as if he had a continual smirk on his face.

"Well, dear Buchholz," exclaimed Herr Krause, "still in good humour, in spite of your troubles, I am glad to see."

"I'm not a bit in good humour," replied Carl snappishly. "If you want to do me a favour send for a doctor."

"A doctor?" said Herr Krause, with a derisive smile. "There is no occasion here for a doctor, I hope. Doctors do not by any means understand the secrets of nature. The main point in medicine is to *cure* diseases, and that cannot be learned by killing cats and dissecting dogs. Then think of the stuffs they make people swallow—poisons and purgatives that bring on life-long ailments. Homœopathy, on the other hand, destroys diseases in a natural way."

"I suppose with bits of wood and spirit of mustard-seed," said Carl in a provoking tone.

Herr Krause only smiled, and, by way of explaining his method, added: "The homœopathic principle is to cure by means of the spirit of medicine. Take, for instance, a bottleful of water as large as the moon, add to this one drop of medicine well shaken up with it. You will then have a homœopathic remedy."



“Goodness!” I could not help exclaiming, “but who can shake the moon?”

“I am speaking figuratively, dear Frau Buchholz,” replied Herr Krause. “Now let us first of all test your husband’s symptoms so as to find the right medicine. Do you feel a burrowing pain in your tooth, Buchholz?”

“Not since that woman Grunert left,” replied Carl.

“Ah! no burrowing pain, therefore. Does the pain move from left to right or from right to left?”

“It sticks where it is.”

“Aha! then *pulsatilla* is the medicine! The swollen cheek indicates a chill. We shall therefore use *aconite* and *pulsatilla* alternately.”

“I beg your pardon, Krause, but the swollen cheek is the result of the spirit of mustard-seed.”

“Then we must first use camphor so as to drive the mustard poison from the system,” replied Herr Krause.

With this he opened his medicine-case and laid three small white globules on my husband’s tongue and stirred other globules in a little water, saying that Carl was to sip a little of the water every hour. He further explained that the pain would at first become more violent—it being natural to get worse first, as the spirit of the medicine was warring against the spirit of the disease—but that the trouble would be relieved as if by magic shortly afterwards. He, moreover, forbade tobacco, tea, coffee, acids, spices, and especially camomile tea, which, he declared, brought on years of ill-health. He then left. My husband took the medicines exactly as prescribed, but the toothache got worse and worse. “Thank God,” I exclaimed, “the two spirits are fighting it out well; he will soon be better now!” Carl groaned so that I was truly grieved for him. He walked up and down the room, then sat down, and

then again lay down on the sofa, burrowing his head right into the corner.

"I cannot stand it any longer!" he cried at last.

"Do keep quiet, Carl dearest. Did you not hear Krause say that the pain must get worse before it gets better? Take another sip of this, and let your teeth fight it out well."

We waited hour after hour, but the pain did not give way. Carl wanted to smoke, but that had been strictly forbidden. At dinner we had his favourite dish—stewed meat with vinegar sauce. This too he dared not touch. He became furious when he found that he had to be content with bread-and-milk.

Emmi suggested that Herr Krause might have driven out the spirit of mustard-seed, but that perhaps the poho essence was still at work. So she hurried off to ask him. She was away a considerable time, and when she returned said, that Herr Krause had looked up in his medical book but could not find any antidote for poho, and also said that this poison might neutralise the effect of his medicines. In that case homœopathy was simply powerless.

Carl's stock of patience was clearly coming to an end. He called Emmi a silly hen, and me a stupid goose. It was just as if he were out of his mind, and he stalked up and down the room like a tiger in its cage. I burst into tears, and Emmi cried too. "Carl," I exclaimed, "how unkind you are to us, how cruel you are, when we are doing everything we possibly can to mitigate your sufferings. You are an unnatural father to act like this towards us helpless creatures! Carl, Carl, you are behaving wickedly both to me and to your child also."

He made no answer, and when I looked up from my pocket-handkerchief, my eyes filled with tears, there I

saw Carl standing on his head on the sofa with pain. This was horrible in the extreme! For surely there could be nothing more dreadful than to see the father of one's children, a vestryman and guardian, standing on his head with his heels high up above the back of the sofa? I gave a loud scream in my dismay and distress.

At that moment Fritz came in. "What sort of comedy is this?" he called out, laughing, when this picture of domestic despair met his eyes. It was with some difficulty that he was made to understand what had happened, for while our voices were choked with sobs, and Carl kept on making inarticulate noises, Fritz himself was nearly in a fit with laughter.

"Carl, old fellow, what have they been doing to you?" he said, at last.

"Dosing me with home remedies."

"Couldn't you have sent for Dr. Wrenzchen, Wilhelmine?" said Fritz to me.

"Who thinks of sending for a doctor the moment things go wrong?" said I. "What are home remedies for, I should like to know?"

"To plague and torment your husband with," was his reply.

Fritz then began to scold Carl for having allowed himself to be dosed with old wife's messes (I do believe that was the vulgar expression he used), and then told him to get on his coat and to come to a dentist with him. This, he said, would be better than sending for Dr. Wrenzchen, whose business was more for internal than for external troubles.

This proposal is not what I should have liked best, for if Dr. Wrenzchen had been called in, he might have had a chat with Betti; but we women have always to give in to rude force.

Fritz drove off with Carl, and in an hour's time they returned. Carl was rid of his tooth and of the pain, and like a new-born creature ; but the beginning of this new year of our marriage was not as pleasant as had always been the case before. Carl had been too hard upon me, and that I could not forgive at a moment's notice. Had we not all meant to do our best for him ?

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### GHOST STORIES.

I SHOULD have written again long since if anything very special had occurred ; however, thank God, in our house things have gone on very quietly, and nothing has happened of any interest to you. A few days ago, certainly, Carl had a sudden attack of lumbago, but that is now getting better, after the poor dear soul had sixteen dry cuppings on the broad of his back. Just at present I have rather an aversion to home remedies, good as they are in many cases.

As Carl was staying at home, which we had not calculated upon, it was impossible for us to work at the dressing-gown, which was to be a surprise for him at Christmas. It is to have a velvet edge worked in with silk, and will take a good bit of time to make, a thing one never can get men to understand. Let them be ever so well up in their own business, the value of a woman's work seems always a difficult thing to drive into their heads. I said, therefore, to my girls : " Children, we shall never get your father's dressing-gown ready in time, for when are we to work at it if he's in the house all day ? I think we had better go to the Joachims' this evening, and make up for lost time ; we owe them a visit in any case." The girls were delighted with this proposal, for they are uncommonly fond of

going to the Joachims'. Frau Joachim was a friend of mine when we were girls ; we both married about the same time, and her girls and mine are about one age and have the same names. Carl looked a little put out when he heard that we were going out for the evening, for he doesn't like being left alone at home. But when I told him that our visit could not possibly be put off, he gave in. Since that affair at the Exhibition and Fritz's wicked manœuvre to make him go in for the beer wager, Carl has, in fact, become more submissive than before ; in my heart I am really grateful to our city magistrate, for without his efforts that most blessed undertaking would never have come to anything.

When we got to the Joachims' there was equal pleasure on both sides. Dr. Joachim had gone to his club, where an eminent politician was to read a paper on 'Cabs, and Insurance against Accidents' ; so we ladies were left to ourselves to work at our Christmas gifts undisturbed, and could chat away to our hearts' content. It was really delightful sitting at work in this way. Besides, what would one not do to give others pleasure ?

Frau Joachim asked whether Carl were coming to fetch us home, whereupon I told her that he had had an attack of lumbago which had come upon him so suddenly, one might really have thought it the work of some evil spirit. Frau Joachim laughed at me and said : "I know, Wilhelmine, that you were always rather inclined to be superstitious, but your believing in evil spirits in this way is really carrying things too far." "I don't exactly say that I believe in evil spirits," was my answer, "but still a good many things do happen in this world which no one can explain properly, not even Fritz, who knows most things better than other people." Frau Joachim laughed again and said that

everything in life could be explained in a natural way. "Indeed," said I; "well, then, in the Bülow Strasse, at the Kuleckes', there is a table with the spirit of a deceased coffin-maker in it, and the spirit can be distinctly heard sawing and hammering away, if a number of people hold hands and form a ring round it," "I've heard of those spiritualistic meetings at the Kuleckes'," said Frau Joachim.—"And why shouldn't they have them? Titled folks have meetings too for spirit-rapping and animal magnetism, and the Kuleckes, as we all know, like doing what the great folks do. At Baron von G.'s, they lately put one of the men-servants into a mesmeric sleep and made him eat so many potatoes—he believing them to be pears—that the man was ill for two days afterwards."—"Well, I call that wickedly trifling with the health of a fellow-creature."—"Not a bit; it's done for scientific purposes, and that is why Fritz never misses one of the meetings at the Kuleckes'. He says Fräulein Kulecke is a splendid medium."

"Uncle Fritz says she has a perfect figure," interposed Betti.

"Aha, I see," said Frau Joachim.

"That has nothing whatever to do with the matter," I replied. However, I resolved in my own mind to catechise Fritz, for the Kuleckes are not just the people for us to associate with; they are so stuck up, and yet can't have much to boast of, seeing that they have had several losses.

While I was sitting silent and thinking what questions I would put to Fritz, suddenly we heard a most piteous whining noise. "Good gracious," I cried, "what's that?" "It's only the dog," said the eldest girl; "we locked him into father's room, and the lamp has probably gone out."—"What makes you think that?"—"Oh, because the dog can't bear being in the

dark alone," replied Frau Joachim, "he gets frightened and howls. It's all quite in the natural order of things, Wilhelmine."

And so it proved to be ; the lamp in the room was re-lit, and the dog then ceased whining. I remarked that it had been maintained that dogs could see spirits. "Perhaps the dog had seen something and felt terrified." "Possibly, then, he may have seen the woman!" said Frau Joachim.—"What woman?" I exclaimed in amazement.—"Well, Wilhelmine, you know I don't believe in ghosts or in mysteries, but a few years ago something very strange did appear to me, and it occurred the other day again. The fact is a woman comes into our room at night, although all the doors are locked."

"A woman? Into your room through a locked door?" I exclaimed in dismay, and felt my breath going.

Frau Joachim continued: "I wake up in the middle of the night when the woman comes; I seem to feel that she is there, and have to get up out of bed whether I want to or not. Then I see her quite distinctly with her head through the half-opened door, looking round the room."—"Round your bedroom?" I called out, horrified.—"No, looking into this room."—"And yet you get up?"—"Of course, for the door has to be shut."—"And you come in here?"—"Yes, I do, and when I want to shut our door the woman puts her head in between so that with all my strength I can't get it closed."—"And you mean to say that the spirit stands close to you?"—"Quite close."—"And you do not scream out?"—"Why should I scream? I'm not frightened." "And what does the woman look like?"—"Thin and ugly, with deep-set eyeholes filled—not with eyes—but with black dust; she has a grinning

mouth and large yellow teeth. A grey shawl is wrapped round her head, which is ashy grey too. Her hands are hidden, but on her feet are shoes of an old-fashioned shape."—"And you mean to say a thing of that kind pokes its head through that door? When does it vanish again?"—"After I have tried in vain to get the door shut, I take a light and hold it before the woman's face, the flame flickers a little as if something blew at it, but the figure then disappears, and I lock the door and go back to bed."—"And you have seen that spirit often?"—"Very often. My husband thinks the apparition must be a kind of nightmare, and I think so too."—"That can't account for it all, for you say you are awake and take a lighted candle to the door, and that you can't get it closed. There's something ghostly in that. Unaccountable things do happen."—"Well, just as you please," replied Frau Joachim, smiling: "when that woman comes again, I will tell her that my friend Wilhelmine Buchholz wishes to make her acquaintance!"—"For Heaven's sake, do nothing of the kind," I exclaimed in horror; "it would be the death of me!"

All this made me feel most uncomfortable, for Frau Joachim does not believe in ghosts, and for her to have seen an awful apparition like that with her own eyes, was dreadful to think of. There was a real ghost there, that seemed to me pretty clear.

It was now time for us to return home, I thought; it had become rather late, and also I felt terrified that any moment the door might open and the ghostly figure appear. When we were out in the street Frau Joachim called out after me, "Wilhelmine, I won't forget to send the woman to you!" I felt all of a quiver, and the children and I lost no time in getting home.



I sent the girls to bed as soon as we got in, and told them not to let themselves be frightened by the stupid story we had heard; yet I was myself more fidgety than I cared to admit. Carl was fast asleep, but I woke him up to tell him the ghost story, and to ask him what he thought about it. "Oh, Wilhelmine," he said reproachfully, "I was sleeping so soundly!"—"But Carl, I feel terrified! You must keep awake, you promised at the altar that you would stand by me in trouble!"—He declared, however, that nothing had been said about such things, and that he had never been forbidden to go to sleep when he chose to. "Carl," said I, "how can you talk like that; did the clergyman not say that a husband must comfort his wife and be her shelter in trouble and danger?"—"If any one is in trouble it's me with my lumbago; and there's no danger that I can see."—"I am terrified; that ought to be enough for you. Fancy if that woman's spirit were to come in now!"—"Do leave me in peace, Wilhelmine!"—"At all events, wait till I am in my bed. Repeat some verse to keep you awake a little, there's a good fellow. Say it over and over again till I have taken down my hair."—"How silly you are, Wilhelmine!"—"Carl, I can't tell you how horribly frightened I feel. When once I'm in bed, maybe I shall feel better; if the woman does come, then I shall hide my head under the covers. Carl, dear, do keep awake. Frau Joachim said she would send the woman, and it's past twelve now. Try the verse, Carl. Ghosts cannot bear anything out of the Bible or hymn-book!" At last he gave in to my entreaties, and began repeating a line from one of the morning hymns; it was only the one line: "Awake my soul, and with the sun." He repeated it over and over again, as it was all he knew. It wasn't much, but still something.

Meanwhile, I was busy undressing, and undoing my hair. All of a sudden, when looking into the glass, to my horror I saw that our bedroom door was being quietly opened. I could not stir or utter a sound. I sat there rigid before the glass as if bewitched. Something rustled outside as if about to come in, a head became visible and came forward slowly—the woman was there, that ghastly woman! One second more and it would have been in the room. With a scream I jumped up, flew at the door, but it would not close. I gave it a tremendous push when the spirit shrieked, “Oh, mamma, you will kill me!” Carl, on hearing my scream and the shriek, started out of bed in spite of his lumbago. “Good God, what’s the matter?” he cried out.—“I don’t know,” said I, panting for breath, “first it was the woman, and now it’s Betti.” Betti was lying on the floor holding her head. I felt as if about to faint, and all of a tremble. “It will be the death of me!” I cried; “Betti, how could you frighten me so?”

“Mamma,” sobbed the child, “when we left the Joachims I put my work into your bag, and forgot to take it out when we got home; it was something I was making for you at Christmas, and as I didn’t want you to see it, I was only coming in to fetch it. Oh, dear—my ear!” I got the candle to examine her head, and found a bruise on her forehead, and her ear bleeding; you may fancy my dismay when I saw what I had done to my child. But I was thankful matters were no worse. “That comes of your believing in ghosts, Wilhelmine,” said my husband.—“Carl,” said I to him, “why are you standing there barefoot, and you ill? There were twelve degrees of frost as we came in. I will give Betti some arnica, and send for Dr. Wrenzenchen in the morning.”

We gradually settled to rest, and when Dr. Wrenzen came next day to examine Betti's ear, he said no great harm had been done, that it was only external. He was so kind to the girl that I invited him to dine with us next Sunday. When I asked him what his favourite dish was, he said: "I am passionately fond of roast veal." Well, he shall have it. Who knows but what the affair with the ghost may yet have a very pleasant ending!

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#### THE PUNCH-BOWL ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

We have generally spent New Year's Eve turn about at each other's houses—first at the Krauses', then at the Bergfeldts', and then at our house. Last year we met at our house, so now it's the Krauses' turn again. I wonder how it will be next year when the Bergfeldts have to invite us!

Frau Bergfeldt had offended me mortally; I can't say how mortified I had been. Had she been lying at her last gasp asking me for a drop of water, I could have given her oil of vitriol instead. But no—these feelings came over me only at the first moment of my rage, and were probably the cause of my having that bilious-fever. I have got the better of them now, however, and no longer feel as bitter as I did, and am just a little ashamed that such thoughts could ever have arisen in my breast. But still I do not by any means wish to say that Frau Bergfeldt wasn't to blame. Quite the reverse, for it was *she* who began it.

Well, and so it is the Krauses' turn!—Herr Krause came in himself to invite us, and Carl accepted the invitation without further ado. "Carl," I exclaimed a little sharply, "have you inquired whether the Berg-

feldts are to be there or not ? He answered curtly : "Of course they will be there ; we always meet on New Year's Eve, and it will be the same this year, I suppose." He made this remark in a more determined tone of voice than I had heard him speak for long. While he was speaking I fixed him with my eye, and although he knew quite well what my look meant he paid no heed to it whatever.

"Indeed !" I exclaimed, without adding another syllable ; but there was something in that "indeed " of mine which so dismayed Carl that it was easy to see that he felt dry in the mouth from fear.

"Dear Frau Buchholz," put in Herr Krause gently, "is it so very impossible then for you to be forgiving ? Out in the big world there are disputes enough, and hate and dissensions crop up on all sides. Are these evil spirits to be allowed to spoil our family life, to tear asunder old bonds of friendship and to destroy the few joys that spring up from social intercourse ?" I battled a little with myself and then said : "With evil spirits I will have nothing whatever to do—I've had enough of such things lately, when that woman-ghost appeared to me ; and as to being unsociable, no one shall ever say that of me. Herr Krause, you have spoken beautifully, and it would be wrong of me if I didn't give way. But that Frau Bergfeldt must let me have the first word, remember. I bargain for that, or else things remain as they are."

Herr Krause said he would answer for Frau Bergfeldt doing as I wished, and so I promised to be one of the party.

Scarcely had Herr Krause left when I said to Carl : "He is certainly right ; it is better to live in peace than at strife. What's the use of perpetual sulking ? Our children's Christmas frocks will have to be got ready,

however, and I shall wear the new locket with the large diamonds that you gave me. The Bergfeldts will have nothing to come up to that."

When the evening came, I said to my husband: "Do not let us be the first to arrive; it looks ill-bred to be very punctual."—"As you like, Wilhelmine. But remember we are not going to a formal party, we shall only be among friends." However, I insisted upon what I had said, and so we waited till the boy Krause came in and told us that every one had come, and that the whipped cream was getting thin, and that his mother could not keep it any longer. So off we went. When we got there I let my husband lead the way; I followed in my light grey silk, a little cut out at the throat, and with my locket on; by my side were the girls, looking very well in their Christmas dresses.

Every one in the room rose to bid us welcome. The Krauses were very hearty, so also was Herr Bergfeldt, but that wife of his made me a bow as cold and stiff as if it had lain in ice for a week. It absolutely took away my breath when Frau Krause asked me to take a seat on the sofa beside Frau Bergfeldt. It was a terrible moment for the party, and all noticed it, yet no one said a word. All at once Fritz broke the awful silence by singing out: "Wait till the clouds roll by!" This made everybody laugh, while I and Frau Bergfeldt on the sofa, side by side, coloured up to our eyebrows. The moment had now come to show which of us two was the better bred, and so I at once exclaimed: "Well let the clouds roll by;" whereupon Frau Bergfeldt added, "Yes, certainly, let them; there's but one New Year's Eve in the year!" Every one agreed to this, tea was brought in, and after tea preserved cherries with whipped cream for the ladies, and beer for the gentlemen. And before I knew where I was I found

myself chatting away with Frau Bergfeldt in our old pleasant way. The young people set about playing "hunt the thimble," and Uncle Fritz took part in it, keeping the whole party merry with laughter, while we elderly folks talked about this and that till supper was ready. Frau Bergfeldt had told me that young Weigelt was doing well, and would probably have passed his examinations by next year, and that then he and Augusta would be married; she also made me promise that I would come to the wedding. It was just the old days over again. I suspect Herr Krause had had a talk with her. This made it clear to me how much good a sensible man can do, if he but uses his opportunity properly. In fact, I could not help wishing that my Carl were a little more like Herr Krause in this, much as I am satisfied with him in every other way.

At supper too it was extremely pleasant. We were a little closely packed, it is true, but still there was room enough. First we had the regular New Year's soup (*Mahnpielen*), then stewed carp with horse-radish, roast meat with preserved fruit, and ice to finish up. In the centre of the table stood the punch-bowl. Herr Krause and Uncle Fritz filled our glasses from it, and when the bowl was emptied Frau Krause fetched a new supply in a large jug and refilled the bowl. The merriment went on increasing. Between the courses we sang songs, which Fritz accompanied on the piano. Before the fish we sang *Wohlauf noch getrunken den funkelnden Wein*, and before the roast *Wir gehen nach Lindenau*, to which Fritz made up a lot of new verses, singing them as solos, we others joining in as the chorus. How we did laugh, to be sure! In one verse Fritz made a hit at me and my writing by singing something about my liking my letters to be read everywhere, "even in Lindenau." What a merry

fellow he is! Even little Krause joined in the songs, and all the evening kept on humming "We're off to Lindenau."

When we had the ice *intus*, as young Weigelt is fond of putting it, Herr Krause rose, looked at his watch and knocked his glass to make way for his speech. In a moment there was a perfect and even a solemn silence; the boy Krause too dropped his singing after having got a gentle slap from his father; and truly Herr Krause's speech was most affecting. What he said was something of this sort: That the New Year was always joyfully welcomed as if it had the power of fulfilling every hope and every wish, even the most fruitless and dangerous, whereas the Old Year was allowed to depart without sorrow or regret, as if it had promised more than it had been able to fulfil; but that during three hundred and sixty-five days it had been our constant companion and had brought us alternately joy and sorrow such as God considered good for His human creatures. For that joy stimulated, while sorrow purified our hearts, and both possessed the power of drawing human beings nearer to one another; that where true love had found a home, every new year formed one more ring round the hearts of those who loved each other, so that in the end they could not live apart; that we must hope from the New Year that, whatever it might bring, it would strengthen this love of ours.—Just as Herr Krause ended we heard twelve o'clock striking dolefully in the next room, and we drank healths all round by knocking our refilled glasses one against the other. Young Krause however called out: "It struck thirteen; I counted it!"—and this was, in fact, quite true. Uncle Fritz, who had struck the hour in the next room with the tongs, had given thirteen raps by way of a joke. We laughed, of course,

but did not let this disturb our merriment, although, as every one knows, thirteen is not a very comfortable number.

Uncle Fritz has, in fact, a good deal of the free-thinker about him.

We remained till about two in the morning, and broke up feeling that we had spent a very merry and pleasant evening. Frau Bergfeldt invited us to their house for her birthday festival, which is in a day or two, and I have accepted. Thus, it may be said, the hatchet lies buried betwixt us.

On our way home I said to Carl that I thought Herr Krause had acted a very noble part in bringing about a reconciliation between me and Frau Bergfeldt. "He has done no more than he ought," replied Carl, "for I begged him to do it."—"You, Carl?"—"Your quarrel had been troubling me very much."—"You dear good fellow!" said I, and threw my arms round his neck and gave him a hearty kiss.

"Wilhelmine!" he exclaimed in surprise. "Well," said I, "you are the very best fellow under the sun, Carl! Your heart is in its right place; if only you had the right words on your tongue as well." Whereupon he said, laughing: "There are pretty good reasons for their not being there, Wilhelmine—you do enough talking for the two of us."—"Carl, what do you mean, now?"—"Come, come, dear child," said he, "never mind, and only let things be in the new year as they have been with us in the old."

Thus it was that we celebrated New Year's Eve in the Landsberger Strasse. Perhaps this time next year one of my girls will be engaged, and Uncle Fritz may also have found some one to suit him; it's high time he did. And so A Happy New Year!



### A MAGNETIC TEA-PARTY.

Do you believe in it, or do you not believe in it—I mean, of course, in human magnetism?

You know I have always been for enlightenment, and so have always said there is nothing in human magnetism, for science doesn't acknowledge it, as I have often read. A short time ago, however, I had a dream and distinctly saw my aunt who lives in Bützow. A month afterwards she was lying in her coffin. Now, how can that be accounted for?

I told Fritz my dream when we got the news that our aunt had died, and that we, being the nearest relatives, were to come into the money she left. I expected him to make fun of me, as is his way with most things, unfortunately; he didn't, however, but said quite seriously: "There you have it, Wilhelmine, at last you are coming to believe that there are secret workings in nature and in human life. In future, I suppose you'll have no more objection to my going to the Kuleckes, who have formed a small magnetic society."

"Fritz, the magnet that draws you to the Kuleckes is the daughter of the house. Now I want to tell you, that as we are coming into a good bit of money from Bützow, the Kuleckes will no longer be fit acquaintances for us. One must consider one's family a little and one's position." He looked at me in rather a peculiar way and said: "Wilhelmine, you judge according to your understanding. But there *is* a mysterious power which governs mankind, and all of us have to follow whether we will or no." "You mean to say you really believe that, Fritz?"—"Certainly," said he seriously, and I could not think what had come over him. "Fritz," said I at last, "have you ever met

with anything mysterious of that kind?"—"Yes," he replied, in a somewhat low voice.

"For Goodness sake, Fritz!" I cried, "you are making me feel perfectly terrified. Yet I should really like once to judge for myself."—"Well," he replied, "you say the Bergfeldts and Krauses are coming in to-morrow; I could arrange a magnetic meeting which will convince you of the mysterious power."—"But remember," said I, "that girl Kulecke I won't have cross my threshold."—"We'll manage without *she*," he exclaimed, now laughing all of a sudden and quite unabashed at his glaring orthographical mistake. And off he went.

I told the children that we were going to have a magnetic tea-party the next day. Emmi seemed delighted, but Betti became deathly pale and cried: "Oh, Mamma, please do not, we shall all be made wretchedly unhappy."—"Betti!" I exclaimed in surprise.—"Mamma, believe what I say."—"But child, whatever is the matter with you? You have lately, I know, not been looking as well as you did. You hardly ever speak, never laugh, and are always playing doleful tunes on the piano. I noticed too the other day that, when we had your favourite dish—mashed potatoes with sausages—you had only one helping. What does all this mean, Betti?"—"I had headache," was her answer.—"That comes from too much studying," said I, "have you still essays to write for school?"—"Yes."—"And what was your last subject?"—"We had to consider whether Richard III. would have been a good man had he had different parents."—"I shall speak to your father and see whether these lessons of yours at the Institution for the Higher Education of Girls had not better be dropped. This afternoon, at all events, we shall have to set about making pastry for to-

morrow, and shall have to make more than usual, for there is scarcely ever enough when the Bergfeldts are of the party." "Oh, Mamma, I thought you and Frau Bergfeldt had made up your quarrel." "Well, yes, we did; but nevertheless I am not fond of the family. And as we shall be coming into the property of my aunt in Bützow, there will be a greater difference between us and the Bergfeldts than ever there was. They must have to pinch fearfully to make both ends meet."

My girls helped me in the kitchen. Betti, however, again complained of headache, so I thought it wisest to pack them both off for a walk, as the fresh air might do Betti's head good. I meant it all for the best, yet, as it turned out afterwards, I did very wrong to let Betti out of my sight that day.

Next evening the Krauses and Bergfeldts came in as arranged. There were no less than five of the Bergfeldts—he, she, Augusta and her young man, and Emil the son. However, I was prepared with the necessary amount of cakes.—"Where is Betti?" said I to Emmi, noticing that my eldest girl was not there.—"She won't come in," answered Emmi.—"Let me have a talk with her," said Uncle Fritz, "I fancy she's afraid of the magnetism." After a time Betti did appear, but, oh my stars! what a sight the child looked! Her eyes were red with crying, her cheeks without a vestige of colour, and she quaked so, any one might have noticed it. To-morrow, thought I, Doctor Wrenzchen must be sent for; there is something more than merely external the matter with her—she must be ill. Betti came forward and saluted our visitors, first the Krauses, of course, as people of more importance than the Bergfeldts; then she went up to Frau Bergfeldt, however, threw her arms round her and gave her a kiss. This

struck me as a little peculiar, I must confess, and Fritz put on a most amused expression when he saw my amazement at this piece of familiarity. However, tea was then served, Betti, Emmi and Augusta handing round the things. The one took the tea, the other the cream and sugar, and the third the cakes—which everyone said were excellent. The truth is, however, that the cakes were not quite what they might have been, for when making them my attention had to be divided between Betti and the paste-bowl; still the cakes were well enough flavoured.

The gentlemen then began a very learned conversation about human magnetism. Fritz declared himself a believer in it; Herr Krause was not altogether sure; Herr Bergfeldt was quite opposed to the idea; and my Carl said nothing, but drank his beer. Fritz related that when the Breslau professors came to Berlin, they brought matters so far at the Charité, that by merely laying their hands on a cabman they had made him recite the opening lines of Homer in Greek. This made Herr Krause declare that, as a teacher, he must be allowed to express his doubt about the truth of such a story. Fritz, however, fetched a volume where this statement had been recorded by the professors. These records spoke of wonderful things, such as, for instance, that by means of hypnotism a person could be made to do anything the magnetiser wished—made to believe that he was riding a horse while on a chair, to swallow string and to fancy it lampreys, to drink bitters and to imagine it champagne. "Nay, but I hope he enjoyed it too!" exclaimed Frau Bergfeldt. Herr Krause maintained that he could not believe this to be true till he had seen something of the kind with his own eyes. I, thereupon, threw in my story about my aunt in Büt-

zow, and took the opportunity of letting the Bergfeldts know that we had come into a good bit of money. Fritz began, however, to dispute the subject with Herr Bergfeldt, and proposed to make some experiments to convince those who had doubts.

We were all very excited as to what would happen. Fritz then asked Augusta to go out of the room, and when she had gone, he asked us what we would like her to do. We were all willing that she should open the photograph album and point her finger at my husband's portrait. Uncle Fritz then called her in, blindfolded her, and stood behind her, placing his hands upon her shoulders. Augusta stood for a little perfectly still, then all of a sudden she walked to the table, took up the album, turned over the pages, and then pointed to a photograph. The one she pointed to was not exactly Carl's likeness, but that of his friend Ringelmeier, who was now dead. Nevertheless, what she had done was most surprising, especially as Frau Bergfeldt assured us that one day lately Augusta had managed to find the very photograph that had been fixed upon. Herr Krause still declared that he could see nothing supernatural in the experiment, whereupon Augusta said that she was not in the proper mood this evening, but that Betti made a splendid medium.

"Our Betti?" I exclaimed in dismay.—"The children have been amusing themselves pretty often lately with human magnetism," put in Frau Bergfeldt.—"I've been told nothing about it then," was my reply.—"You've got to be told a good many things yet, Wilhelmine," was Fritz's remark. He then turned to Betti, saying: "Are you ready to begin?" Betti did not answer, but sat looking like a ghost. "Come, Betti, pick up your courage; it's got to be done, you know." Betti rose and went out of the room, looking just as if she were

walking in her sleep. Augusta followed her. "Now, Wilhelmine," said Fritz, "you fix upon something for her to do."—"I can't think of anything just at this minute," said I.—"Well, then, shall she embrace and kiss the person dearest to her on earth?" asked Fritz. My answer was: "Do as you like; I don't mind having an embrace from her." Betti came in and was blindfolded. For some time she seemed to hesitate about what she had to do, but then came forward, and I had already opened my arms to receive her, when she turned aside, went straight up to Emil Bergfeldt, who looked down at her with emotion, and sank into his arms, and he quickly unbound her eyes and kissed her.—"This is going beyond a joke!" I cried, and rose up. "Carl, do you stand there quietly and allow such things to go on?"—"Come, Wilhelmine," said Fritz, "do not get angry; these two have long since made up their minds. They are in love with each other, and there's an end of it."

"I beg leave to differ from you, Fritz. I've a word to say surely on such a subject! And you, Carl, do you say nothing to all this?"—"I have given my consent," he replied quietly.—"And I say it's impossible, now that we have come into that money."—"And I say just because of that," replied Carl, "haven't you noticed how our child has been suffering latterly, and that she has been fading away like a shadow?"—"I certainly have noticed it," said I.—"Well, then, I've got to tell you that it all comes from her struggle between duty and love, it's this that made her miserable. Betti hadn't the courage to tell you that she was in love with Emil Bergfeldt."—"Did she tell you, then?" "No, she didn't," put in Fritz, "but I saw what was going on, and begged Carl to leave me to tell you in my own way. As you see, I have now done so

on the magnetic principle.”—“And allow me to tell you that I have other prospects in view for my daughters; they may get quite into the upper circles now.”—“And perhaps be made miserable,” added Carl bitterly. “When we were young, did we ever think about rank and position? Would you have refused me had some man of title come to take you from me?”—While he was speaking my thoughts flew back to that blessed time when I could not possibly have done otherwise than love him—him, who had become more than all the world to me. And here I was, fancying that my girls were children still, never thinking it possible that they too would one day wish to choose for themselves as their hearts prompted them, and never thinking that the time had actually come. “Betti!” I cried; and she came to me, threw her arms round me, and sobbed as if her heart would break. “Oh, Betti, you had no trust in me, no trust in your mother!”—“Mamma,” she sobbed, “I did not want to grieve you. I knew you would not consent to my loving Emil . . . and so I could not tell you that I loved him.” Fritz broke in here and said: “Wilhelmine, the mysterious power that rules mankind and to which we have all to submit whether we wish or not, is love.” “And,” added Herr Krause, “the Greeks even called Eros the All-Subduer.”

I had now recovered my calmness of mind, and led Betti away to her room, where I told her that I did not mean to give my consent forthwith, or to be intimidated by Uncle Fritz’s way of acting.

On returning to the sitting-room, I told our guests that what had taken place was a mere piece of nonsense of Fritz’s, who had only wanted to induce us to believe in human magnetism, and, therefore, that there could be no question about any serious engagement

between my Betti and Emil Bergfeldt. Carl seemed very much annoyed at my remarks, and Frau Bergfeldt said: "Dear Frau Buchholz, the young people need be in no hurry. There's time enough yet for Emil." "Plenty," said I dryly.—"If only you did not bubble up so, we might long since have talked the matter over," muttered that Frau Bergfeldt. "So you were in the plot too!" said I. "We met yesterday afternoon to discuss with Herr Fritz what was to be done, and he maintained we should never get your consent in any straightforward manner. I am myself more for letting things take their natural course."—I felt petrified. To think of my baking those cakes yesterday for that brood of vipers, and Betti with them conspiring against her own mother! Everyone knew about it except myself. The very thought of it made me laugh a horrid laugh.—"There now," said Frau Bergfeldt, "she's going to have a fit, and we shall have to hold her thumbs."—"No," I exclaimed, "you'll do nothing of the kind! And I should like to see any one of you force me to give in. Nothing whatever shall come of your plottings, not though Herr Emil were to open one of his arteries before my very eyes."—"Wilhelmine, you don't know what you're saying," cried Carl.—"I'm as quiet as ever I was—but shall not allow myself to be made a fool of. Fritz may carry on his nonsense with the Kuleckes and others, but I forbid such doings in my house."

The Krauses had already gone without saying good-bye, and the Bergfeldts were now on the point of leaving. Fritz wanted a few words with me, but I would not condescend to have anything further to say to him. Just as they were leaving Emmi came in to say that supper was ready, but no one would stay. Carl, too, had put on his great-coat, and said he meant to accom-



pany the Bergfeldts, and would come in later, when I was more composed. And I so perfectly composed!

When they had all gone I had a regular cry, and then went to Betti. She was in bed and looked up at me so sadly when I sat down beside her, that I felt sick at heart. "Forgive me, Mamma, I ought to have told you and only you," she said, entreatingly.—I was about to answer: "You are still a child, Betti,"—but was she still a child? Her lovely thick hair was loosened and fell round about her, and her face showed an expression of seriousness unknown to children. She now seemed to me a soft, budding blossom; I had not noticed it before. "Betti, and do you really love him?" I asked.—"Yes," she whispered.—"Do you love him more than you do me?" She was silent—and then I knew I had lost my child, and that her whole being now belonged to another. Ah, how unspeakably painful it is to discover that!

I bent down over her bed and embraced her warmly and lovingly, and said: "You shall be happy, my child, as happy as I once was. I did fancy that you might have become the wife of a man in some good position; but have I not been happy enough in our simple home? No, darling, I have no wish to see you a loveless wife amidst fine carved furniture, nor that winter should be lurking behind silken curtains during your summertime, or that aversion to your enforced husband should be your constant attendant. You see, I love you after all, better than you think." She cuddled up to me and was my child again, and smiled at me and said: "I love you both, Mamma, you and him, and you will love him too as much as you love me, won't you?" Could I do otherwise than say yes?

I called to Emmi to bring in a few slices of the roast meat, for why should it be spoiled? "We will celebrate

the betrothal by a slice of venison.”—“Where is the betrothal?” asked Emmi. “Go you to bed, Emmi, you know nothing about such things yet.”

And so I remained and watched by Betti. Every now and again I looked out of the window, hoping to see Carl coming. It was a spring night, a wind from the west had arisen, and was blowing pretty hard. At last there he was. “Well?” said he, on coming in. “Carl,” said I, “she is asleep; and to-morrow after the storm there will be sunshine.”

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#### IN THE WAGGONETTE.

THERE are people who think it a pleasure to make up a party for an excursion into the country; but that is a downright mistake.

On Whit-Monday we have generally gone out to the Zoological Gardens or had a drive to Treptow where, except for the crowds of people and the dust, it is very pleasant; but this year we settled to spend the day differently, for Betti's engagement to young Bergfeldt had drawn our families closer together, so we could not, of course, leave them out of the question. I would never have tolerated Betti's going with the Bergfeldts, and naturally they wanted Emil to spend the day with them. Uncle Fritz therefore proposed that we should all join in hiring a waggonette, and drive out into the country. He further said that there would be room enough for the Krauses to go too, which would make it a cheaper affair all round. Fritz, moreover, described everything in such glowing colours—how green the country would be looking, how delicious the bread from the farm would taste by the brookside, and how delightful the drive itself in the waggonette

would be—that I agreed to the plan at once. There was plenty to discuss beforehand, especially about the provisions, for otherwise people are so apt to take the same things, and it would probably have ended in nothing but plain sausages and hard-boiled eggs. I for one should be sorry to have no more than that on the Monday of Whitsuntide.

By eight in the morning we had all taken our seats in the waggonette—the Bergfeldts, with Augusta's young man Weigelt, the Krauses, and their boy Edward in white trousers, blue velvet jacket and a new straw hat. Emil Bergfeldt had come over to us early in the morning and had brought Betti a bunch of elder flowers. When we were taking our seats Emil had contrived to get a place beside Betti. However, I planted myself in between them, as I considered it more suitable that they should be apart. I am not one for love-making in public. Carl sat beside Herr Krause, and Uncle Fritz took his seat in front, on the box beside the driver.

When we started Fritz took out his latch-key and whistled away on it as if he had been a steam-engine, and away we rolled through the Prenzlau Gateway, along the Prenzlau Chaussée, for our destination was the Liepnitz Lake.

The weather was beautiful, although a little cool. When we passed the first windmill Uncle Fritz uncorked his flask and said that we must have a mouthful all around, as it was the regular custom. We were not so very warm, so we did take a drop or two of cognac and became very merry. Herr Krause asked whether it was the custom to drink at every mill, whereupon Fritz declared that it was an old custom to drink to every mill. Herr Krause suggested that this custom probably was of Wendish origin, and very likely dated from the hoary days of heathenism. This led to a very

learned talk about lake-dwellings and Tacitus, subjects about which Herr Krause knew a great deal ; but the conversation again turned upon municipal government, where my Carl, of course, felt himself perfectly at home. Uncle Fritz meanwhile conversed with the coachman, and every now and then handed his flask to us in the waggonette. I must confess there were mills in plenty along the road, and what I especially disliked was that the boy Krause was for ever calling out : "There's another mill !" so that none could be passed unnoticed. I warned Carl, but he only laughed at me and said : "Whit-Monday comes but once a year, Wilhelmine."

At half-past eight the horses were made to go at a walking pace, and the baskets were brought out for breakfast. The ladies handed the buttered bread to the gentlemen, and Uncle Fritz came forward with an extra treat for us all by producing all sorts of tins that he had purchased at the Exhibition—delicious Norwegian herrings, anchovies, salted cod-tongues, rolled pickled herrings, and even caviare—something of everything ; and we did thoroughly enjoy the dainties. What I objected to, however, was that the boy Krause got these salted fish to eat ; if he didn't get everything he wanted he immediately began to whimper, and his mother then gave in to him. One piece of pickled herring, however, which he bit at greedily, so burnt his mouth owing to the cayenne pepper, that he began to cry, and this made me speak out. "I wouldn't let the boy have all these things, Frau Krause ; children are always best kept to bread-and-milk." But she answered that her Edward was now big enough to eat anything, that he could drink beer like any grown-up person, and that it agreed with him admirably. Hereupon I remarked that I had read that to give children beer had a bad effect

upon their intellects, and that brewers' children were always the most backward at school. Frau Krause asked her husband if he, as a teacher, had ever noticed such a thing, and his answer was, that I had probably confounded the statement, and that scrofula was no doubt meant; for it had been statistically proved that this disease proceeded from the excessive brandy-drinking in parents. Herr Bergfeldt agreed with him in this, and said to his wife: "You must remember, Kathinka, that girl Rieka from Werder, who was a servant in our house and who went wrong with that drunken carpenter, and afterwards——" But I interrupted him there by asking him whether he didn't think the scenery very beautiful? "Yes," said he, "but it is perfectly true about scrofula." My answer was that that kind of dialogue wasn't to my taste.

Herr Bergfeldt, however, would not give way, we had passed too many mills for that. Just then the boy Krause began to whimper again and to complain of thirst. Water could not be got on the high road, and milk the senseless mother had not brought with her, so there was nothing to be done but to open a bottle of red wine, and that merely to stop the boy's squalling. He eagerly drank a whole wine-glass full. "I only hope it may do him good!" said I.—"He can run it off afterwards on the heath," replied Frau Krause. "Emmi and I will play at horses," said the boy saucily. Emmi said nothing, but made rather a contemptuous face at the suggestion. Betti was rather silent and did not look extra happy, because she was not sitting next to Emil. Augusta Bergfeldt and young Weigelt had hold of each other's hands, and stared out into vacancy, looking for all the world like a couple of wax figures; it was only occasionally that they glanced at each other in a sheepish kind of way; the mere look-

ing at them made me feel quite uncomfortable. Engaged couples are, in fact, worse than no company, except to themselves.

I thanked Heaven in my heart, therefore, when we at last reached the splendid forest and caught sight of the lake, which looked as green as if it had been newly varnished for Whitsuntide. We halted at the forester's house, where the beeches stand highest and their tops meet, forming a kind of cupola like that at the new Anhalt railway station, only, of course, there the dome is made of panes of glass, and here of the delicate green leaves of May. And then the ozone here is of the best quality.

Uncle Fritz and Carl went to the forester's wife to order the mid-morning meal and to discuss what was wanted for dinner. Frau Krause discovered a well, and gave Edward a drink; the boy, according to my calculation, must have swallowed nearly a quart of water, but I didn't say anything; when mothers are so unreasonable, words are as good as thrown away. I wish now, however, that I had spoken.

The mid-morning meal was deliciously rustic and excellent. Wine we had brought with us, that is to say, Chateau Larose, twelve and a half groschen the bottle, with gilt tops. Uncle Fritz did certainly turn up his nose a little at it, but then he is pretty well spoilt; we others enjoyed it, particularly as the wine merchant had told us he lost about sixpence on each bottle, and let us have it at the price out of pure friendship.

We then went for a walk into the woods. Uncle Fritz cut little Krause a stick off a tree, and he ran away riding about upon it, as Emmi was not disposed to be his horse. In fact, poor Emmi was somewhat low-spirited. Her sister and friend paid no heed to

her ; they, of course, had neither eyes nor ears for any one but their lovers, and so Emmi had no one to go about with except us elderly ladies. I felt quite sorry for the child being so forsaken, for when we ladies conversed about the big washing, or discussed whether lemon juice ought or ought not to be added to asparagus sauce, of course she could not be expected to be interested. "Cheer up, Emmi," said I, "who knows but what you may yourself be engaged before long."—"I shall never marry!" she exclaimed. "What do you mean, child?"—"No, I never will," she said sadly, "I shall never leave you and Papa ; Augusta and Betti are both so horrid since they've been engaged!" I talked to her as best I could, but she would listen to nothing.

The gentlemen had meanwhile discovered a good resting-place ; plaids and shawls were spread out, and we sat down comfortably in a picturesque group. Wine had been brought, so that we had all we wanted. I was displeased at one thing, which was that Carl kept throwing dry leaves at Frau Krause, and she didn't seem to mind it. Had Herr Krause tried that joke on with me, I would have let him know what I thought of such behaviour ; but he had lain down and was already sound asleep.

It was not long before I felt myself beginning to nod too, for the spring air tires one. The trees seemed to rustle so gently, the air played so softly about one's face and hair, all sorts of bright dreams seemed to flit to and fro ; this went on till all of a sudden I heard Carl calling out : "Wake up, Wihelmine, it's half-past two, and dinner's ready."—"Goodness!" I exclaimed, "have I been asleep? And for a couple of hours? Where are the children? Where's Betti?"—"She's gone away in among the fir-trees with Emil ; they wouldn't let me go with them."

"And where's Eduard?" asked Frau Krause, shaking dry leaves out of her hair. "He galloped away in that direction," said Emmi, pointing towards the lake. "Good gracious! what if he were to have got drowned!" shrieked the mother, and flew off as if out of her senses. "Eduard," she screamed, "Eduard, where are you?" And I cried: "Betti, Bett-i-i-i!" but got no answer. "And there's the dinner waiting and getting spoilt," said Carl.—"Carl," said I, "how can you be thinking of your stomach at such a moment?"—"Well," was his reply, "if you had let the young folks sit together in the waggonette, they wouldn't have gone away by themselves now. Lovers like being by themselves. Come along, Wilhelmine, Emil knows that dinner was to be at half-past two, and has got a watch. Where's Krause now?"

Herr Krause had gone away after his wife. She screamed out everlastingly: "Eduard, Eduard, where are you?" and he after her: "Adelheid, have you found him?" One might have fancied the forest was in revolt.

We got back to the forester's house very much dispirited. There stood the well-decked table under the trees, but our party were all scattered. Augusta and young Weigelt were there waiting for us, to be sure, but of Betti and Emil there was no sign. It was really distressing.

"Have you seen little Krause?" I asked. "Yes," said Augusta, "he is with the coachman in the stables, riding the horses."—"And his parents meanwhile imagine him at the bottom of the lake! Now we shall have to hunt for the Krauses!"

This accordingly we did, and started off again into the forest, where at last the Krauses were found. She had got into a bog, and her husband was now kneeling



in front of her, wiping her boots with moss. How overjoyed she was upon hearing that her boy was safe and sound, and what a fondling and embracing when she got hold of him—in my opinion it was exaggerated in the extreme. Then she turned upon Emmi and said, that if she had looked after the child, there would not have been all this unnecessary anxiety and trouble. Whereupon, I let drop something about the throwing of dry leaves, and coquetting with men, and that it would be better for people to look after their own children, than to expect other persons to do it. She answered sharply that other people had better sweep the dust from their own doors, for where was Betti, she would like to know? The long and the short of it was, that we were all out of humour when we took our seats at the table, and no one seemed to have a proper appetite, except Frau Bergfeldt ; she, I may say, sated herself.

We had finished dinner when Betti and Emil made their appearance. I was on the point of speaking a little sharply to them, when Carl said : “ Now, Wilhelmine, do keep quiet, and don't expose yourself to remarks in public.” So I checked myself and said jocosely : “ Well Emil, does your watch only make it half-past two ? ” He seemed a little put out, and stammered something about his watch being a little slow. “ More than an hour, I should say ; let us see that precious chronometer of yours ? ” Emil seemed more than ever uneasy. This struck me as peculiar, so I said severely : “ Perhaps your watch is perfectly right after all,” and pulled at his watch chain to get his watch. Alas, there was no watch at all at the end of his chain, nothing but a key !

“ The watch is no doubt in retirement,” put in Uncle Fritz. I was mortified, and felt as if I could have sunk

into the ground. Fancy my Betti's betrothed having pawned his watch! Frau Krause tittered, which made me get up and leave the company. I could not look a creature in the face. All the people round about us, who had assembled since we came, showed happy faces, and fun and merriment were to be heard on all sides; to my ears it all sounded like mockery. I felt in need of being alone, so as to have a good cry. And so, without knowing in the least how I got there, I found myself in the back garden close to the bakery, and I sat down on a log of wood near it. Oh, I felt as if that log were an executioner's block, and that I was about to lose my head, so miserable and wretched did I feel. The future before me seemed of the blackest; of what use now was the property left us by my aunt in Bützow? Emil would pawn everything! Emil was frivolous—I knew that now; but Betti, of course, would trust him completely. A shudder passed over me, for it seemed to me that a person who would pawn a watch, was capable of anything.

After I had sat there some time in utter misery, Emmi came and said: "We are going to drive home now, Frau Krause complains of having wet feet; and papa says that his pleasure is all spoilt."—"What has he got to do with Frau Krause's wet feet?" said I. "He doesn't mean that, Mamma. Papa says that if you are not enjoying yourself, he doesn't enjoy himself either."—"Well, well, child, I am longing to be at home. One surely doesn't take a long drive into the country, merely to sit crying beside the bakery all alone!"

At seven o'clock the waggonette drew up in front of the forester's house. I let them all sit as they chose; what could I, poor helpless woman, do in face of all their unreasonableness? The boy Krause was sitting all alone by the lake and refused to come away. "No,"

he cried, "I want to stay here!"—"Now come along, Eduard, you shall have a piece of cake," said his mother coaxingly. "No," he whined by way of answer. So Frau Krause had to carry him off by force. "He was so happy with the horses," she said in a cajoling tone to Fritz, "do let him sit up on the box beside you for a little while." Fritz agreed, and the boy was placed between Fritz and the driver, and off we started, all of us more or less cross, for the Bergfeldts themselves were annoyed with Emil. Frau Krause was very silent.

After a time Fritz said, "Krause, I am afraid your boy will be falling off the box." And with this he handed the child back into the carriage, Herr Krause taking his son on his knee; but soon the father said he thought Eduard was happier on the box. The boy kept whimpering and crying to himself. "Perhaps there's something the matter with him," said I in a pitying way. "What should be the matter with him?" replied his mother shortly. "Well, perhaps his stomach's upset, and I for one shouldn't be surprised if it were," said I. But she only laughed at me. The gentlemen had meanwhile clearly made up their minds that they were not going to be further troubled with the boy, so I said: "Come to Auntie Buchholz, Eduard," and took him on my knee. But I speedily handed him on to his mother, saying: "He will be best looked after by you, my dear. Cover him up so that he mayn't take cold, it will be pleasanter for him and for us all." Her reply was that children would be children. I replied that when children were not old enough for a day's journey they had better be left at home; whereupon she answered that if Uncle Fritz had not brought those indigestible fish with him, the child would not have been any the worse, that it was the fish that had probably upset him. I had no

inclination for further talk ; my own trouble about Emil was occupying me too much, and my vexation about the whole afternoon was again rising up in my mind.

Some people I know are enthusiastic about getting up a party for an excursion into the country, but I say, then let it be without sets of lovers and without young children—they are only a dead-weight, and turn the pleasantest of days topsy turvy ; moreover outings of this kind run away with a lot of one's strength, for one person has to watch another, and then some one else is sure to be missing.

I felt able to breathe freely again when I caught sight of the first gas lights of Berlin, for we were but a doleful party in the waggonette. We seemed all tired out. The only lively things in the carriage were the two bright Japanese lanterns that hung down from the covering ; they kept dancing to and fro, and from a distance may have looked most cheery. But is real life to be judged from a couple of Japanese lanterns ?

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#### A "POLTER-ABEND"\* ON THE THIRD FLOOR.

I HAVE always maintained that long engagements are of no good whatever.

When two young people are fond of each other, it is no doubt better to let them become engaged. Parents in giving their consent make the young couple uncommonly happy ; but it will be like adding bitter drops to

\* *Polter-abend* may be translated "wedding eve," but this hardly conveys all that is meant by the custom in Germany.—It is a gathering (generally a family one) to celebrate the marriage which is to take place the following day. Mirth and merriment—as the word *Polter* indicates—rule supreme, and the engaged pair take an active part in the festivities.

their cup of happiness if the wedding-day is put off indefinitely.

And so it turned out with the Bergfeldts. Augusta, who was by no means plump to begin with, got to look miserable and like a very shadow. When she stood sideways with her head against a light, it shone through her nose so that it looked like a piece of bees-wax. The doctor, of course, prescribed steel drops, and from time to time she took extract of malt, but none of the medical stuffs had any effect.

Herr Weigelt, her betrothed, had however, lately—thank goodness!—received some small appointment in a law office through some good connections. The place was not worth much, but if his father allowed him something in addition they might manage upon it. In fact, as Frau Bergfeldt said, “Better alive in an attic than dead in an elegant coffin.” And so arrangements were to be made for the wedding.

If I had been in Frau Bergfeldt’s place I would have been content with quite a simple wedding, and have only invited the family circle, as expense had to be considered. However, this was not Frau Bergfeldt’s idea; she would not hear of a wedding without mirth and music. She declared that it was one’s duty to one’s neighbours, if nothing else, and that in any case there would have to be some outlay. It was at last agreed to have the usual festive gathering on the evening before the wedding, and to make use of what was left for the wedding-day itself, when they would only be a family party.

The festivities were to begin at eight o’clock. The best room, the parlour and bedroom were all made use of for the reception of the guests. The beds had been carried up to the loft, and Frau Bergfeldt placed a table with plants where their washstand had stood, for, as she said, “Herr Bergfeldt always splashed so dreadfully

whilst washing that he had ruined the wall-paper." Chairs, glasses and dishes had been furnished by a tradesman in the neighbourhood, for the Bergfeldts' few possessions were not nearly enough.

When we arrived at about half-past eight the rooms were already pretty well filled. The ladies were requested to move into the best room, and took their seats in a pleasant semicircle. Of course Frau Bergfeldt had invited the whole round of her acquaintances, so that we were all more or less strangers to one another. Augusta's own friends were also there and seemed not in the least to know what to do with themselves, and kept sitting three on two chairs. Young Weigelt's landlady, with whom he had lived while a student, was also present.

The gentlemen stood about the room and smoked. Of young Weigelt's friends there were also a number, for the most part students in their last term, very pleasant young fellows. Their dress-coats, however, I must say, seemed to fit them rather oddly and looked as if they had been made for some one else.

By nine o'clock the rooms were crammed full, and one could scarcely move about. Meanwhile tea had been handed round and people began talking to one another. The engaged couple had not yet made their appearance.

Hereupon Uncle Fritz, who had undertaken the arrangement of affairs, came in. He was followed by two of Weigelt's friends, each of whom carried a chair decked with flowers into the best room, and placed them close to the door that led into the parlour. Then Fritz sat down at the piano—a regular old tin-kettle—and struck up the Wedding March out of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' This was the sign for the entry of the bride and bridegroom, who now came in, pushing their

way through the guests, and took their places upon the beflowered chairs. The students gave a loud hurrah when they appeared, and we others clapped our hands too. All this was really very touching, and Fritz had rightly calculated upon the effect.

Augusta Bergfeldt looked pretty well, comparatively speaking. She wore a white muslin dress with green run through it. However, had she been wise, she would never have chosen a low-necked dress. This had struck Carl too, for, as he afterwards told me, he felt quite chilly whenever he looked at her. Of course, I did not let that remark of his pass unnoticed. "Carl," I said, "love is too sublime a thing for it to be ridiculed."—"Well, you should just have heard what the students said about her," was his reply. "Carl," said I, "I don't wish to hear it, and indeed won't hear it. Moreover, I have no wish whatever to hear what gentlemen say to one another when ladies are not present. Students are much too free in their ideas for my taste."

Fritz then played some touching piece of music, and my Betti came in, dressed like a fairy, holding the wedding wreath. She recited a very beautiful poem, which spoke of the parting from the parents' house, from youth, from the joys of childhood, and of the sorrows that were hidden in the future. It closed with the words, "With the wedding wreath and veil, ends for aye the blissful dream." Tears started to Augusta's eyes at the very first words of the poem, and when the line came about being orphaned and forsaken far from the beloved old home, Frau Bergfeldt herself began to cry. Betti wound up by throwing her arms round Augusta, who burst out into loud sobs, and we others could no longer restrain our tears either, and had to take to our handkerchiefs. I have never witnessed anything more affecting than this scene. But then it is no

small matter, surely, to give up one's daughter to a young man, and he almost an utter stranger.

We were suddenly aroused out of this state of mind by a very unpleasant incident. I had warned Frau Bergfeldt to lock up her dog Cissy somewhere for the night, as it was apt to become tiresome with its eternal jumping about. The animal must have got loose ; at all events, it had found its way into the crowded rooms. Probably one of the students had not noticed the little creature ; anyhow, all of a sudden there was a frightful howl as if some one had trod on the animal's foot. Who had done it no one seemed to know.

Augusta jumped up and took Cissy in her arms, and tried to console the creature. "Turn the brute out, Fräulein !" exclaimed Weigelt's late landlady, in a most inelegant manner. I myself never once exchanged a word with that low-bred person.

Augusta insisted upon keeping the animal on her lap, for it was gradually becoming quiet again, and so the evening's entertainment could be continued. A friend of Weigelt's then appeared disguised as a shoemaker's boy. Unfortunately we could not understand a word he said, for the dog barked at him the whole time. Even when a comforter was tied round the creature's head it growled and snarled incessantly, till Herr Bergfeldt took it by the collar and put it out of doors. Augusta was annoyed at this, and put on a very ill-humoured, pouting face, and said to her lover, who was trying to console her : "Oh, don't, leave me alone !" "This will be a nice marriage," I whispered to the Police-lieutenant's wife, who was sitting next me ; and she replied : "She'll have him under her thumb yet, you'll see." I thought so too.

Number three was little Krause. I at once suspected that we should have nothing good from him, his mother



spoils him too much. "Now, Eduard dear," she said, "come and let us have your verse. The boy, who was dressed as a young Tyrolese, would not utter a syllable, and stuck his finger in his mouth. "Eduard, I shall be terribly angry," continued the mother, whereupon the boy drew a long face as if about to cry. "Come, come, Eddy, be a darling." But Eddy could not be made to say a word. "He knew the poem so well this morning," added the mother again; "but the number of people here make him feel confused. Come, Eddy, dear, go and say the poem to Auntie Augusta in a low voice, and give her the silver sugar spoon. Do you hear, Eduard!"

"The spoon belongs to us," cried the brat. "Papa only had our name scratched out!"

Frau Krause in her annoyance looked like an enraged fury, and this made the boy fly off howling to his father, saying that his mother was going to beat him. Herr Krause was sensible enough to pack him off home.

If only something funny to laugh at had now followed, we should all have recovered our good spirits, but first came one of Augusta's friends as a flower-girl with flowers, and another as a baker's girl with a loaf, in order that these things might never be wanting in the new home. This was no great success. The proceedings were brought to a close by my Emmi appearing as Queen of the Night, with a black veil covered with stars of gilt paper round her. It was the girl's own idea, and she said out aloud:—

" I come hither from afar,  
Moon and stars my kingdom are ;  
When sweet slumber all o'ertakes,  
Then the Queen of Night awakes.

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A little song to you I'll sing,  
In your ears its notes will ring ;  
And when e'er alone ye be.  
Then, oh then, remember me."

After reciting these lines, she handed them an album for photographs, with a picture of Lohengrin on the cover singing his farewell. After this she sang, to Fritz's accompaniment, that lovely song: *Wir sassen still am Fenster, das Licht war ausgebrannt*. When she finished, there was no end to the applause—the students were perfectly wild ; and so, as an *encore*, she sang *Wenn ich nach meinem Kinde geh', In seinem Aug' die Mutter seh'!* She received the most extravagant compliments for her performance, one of the students even declared that it was very doubtful whether Gerster could have sung it as well, that Fräulein Buchholz's singing had something peculiarly melodious about it.

The gentlemen had been smoking all the while, and the rooms had become so extremely hot that the moisture was running down the windows in streams, consequently the herring salad that was now being served was very refreshing, although to my mind there was too much apple in it. The ladies drank lemonade, and the gentlemen had beer. The students were kind enough to attend to the filling of the glasses.

Of course, owing to the great crush of people there was no possibility of sitting round the tables, so the things were handed round : slices of bread decorated with all kinds of dainties, and cakes too—in fact, there was plenty of everything, and everything was excellent.

The young people now expressed a wish to have a dance. The students therefore—with a one, two, three—pushed the old piano out into the bedroom, although Herr Bergfeldt stood by with rather a doubtful expres-

sion of face. The dancing, however, began with two couples at a time. The crush was as great as at a subscription ball. I considered it most disgraceful that the young men were allowed to push the table with the plants out into the entrance hall, for, of course, now every one had a pretty good view of the wall which Herr Bergfeldt has so abused with his splashing. Still, that wife of his might quite well have pasted a piece of paper over the place.

While we were sitting there looking on and chatting, the Police-lieutenant's wife said to me that my Emmi had such an excellent voice, it seemed a pity not to have it cultivated properly.

"That has never struck me," said I; "the girl sings everything almost by ear."

"My daughter is going to have singing-lessons," said the Police-lieutenant's wife. "I have heard of a lady who is looking out for pupils. She used to sing at the Opera herself; and nowadays good voices can demand such high prices. Just look at Patti and Lucca, what celebrity and money they have made!"

I felt perfectly giddy. Had not Emmi a few minutes ago been tremendously applauded? And had she not sung most bewitchingly? "I will have a talk with my husband about it," I replied; "something, of course, will have to be done for the girl." Goodness me, to think that our Emmi might make a fabulous fortune with her voice! It was a grand thought; Carl will have nothing to say against the lessons when I have explained it all to him.

Meanwhile it had struck twelve. The engaged couple were sitting pretty quiet away in a corner by themselves, as dancing did not agree with Augusta, and she would not have her lover dance with any one else. Herr Bergfeldt became more and more monosyllabic,

the young men were just singing *Wohlauf noch getrunken* when the door bell rang. "It is sure to be the landlord on account of our making so much noise," said the Police-lieutenant's wife.

We listened, wondering what would happen and whether there would be a regular scene. However, there was not. Solemn were the tones heard of *Ich steh' allein auf weiter Flur*, and when that was over a *Schunkel-walzer* was struck up. The fact was that some of the clerks in Herr Bergfeldt's office—who had started a brass band—wanted to give him a surprise, and had brought their wind instruments with them, and they certainly blew them famously.

By special request they then gave the Patrol-call, which begins very softly and gets louder and louder till it becomes deafening, and all present drum away too.

The landlord did come in then.

What a silence! It was positively uncomfortable!

He said he had no objection to dancing or singing, but that he must absolutely forbid such an uproar. Herr Bergfeldt replied that he paid his rent and could therefore do in his rooms what he chose.—But not any such a war-whooping nor patrol-calling as that. The plaster was falling off the ceiling below.—Then the house was badly built.—If the house was not good enough he was at liberty to go elsewhere.—That was just what he should like.—None of his tenants destroyed the property as much as the Bergfeldts; he would ask Herr Bergfeldt just to look at that wall-paper.—That was no business of his.—The students then began to join in the dispute, and we ladies were about to take flight when Carl exclaimed: "Peace, gentlemen, the landlord has told you that he has nothing against dancing and being merry."

“Have done now altogether!” exclaimed the landlord rudely.

But Uncle Fritz appeared with a glass of freshly drawn beer and handed it to him, saying: “We are young but once in our lives; I’m sure you will join us in drinking the health of the bride and bridegroom.” The man grumbled at first, but then gave in. The students gave him three good cheers, and Frau Bergfeldt handed him some sliced bread decorated with delicacies, which he seemed pleased to accept.

However, the real spirit of the evening had gone, and so sundry people began to take their departure. We too soon bade our friends good-night as the rooms were becoming empty. Augusta had a wretchedly washed-out look. How will things end there, I wonder?

When we left, Uncle Fritz and the students were sitting round the supper-table with the landlord in their midst, and were drinking good fellowship all round.

When the Bergfeldts got to bed I do not know. I should think not for two days afterwards!

“Carl,” said I on our way home, “when our Betti gets married we will have the *Polter-abend* somewhere out of the house.”

“There’s no hurry about that,” he answered shortly. “First of all, I’ve had enough for the present; and the Bergfeldts too, I should think, for some time to come.” I did not tell him anything of what was in my mind about Emmi’s future. When men are out of temper they’re best left to themselves. He will be surprised some day when he finds his child renowned and great; and I mean to carry my point about this.

## WHY WE HAD TO GO TO THE SEA-SIDE.

It could not be denied : Emmi had been a great success. And was such talent to be allowed to rust in the Landsberger Strasse? Could I be responsible for such a thing? No ; we shall all one day be called upon to give an account of ourselves, and no excuses will be taken. And I am not like Frau Bergfeldt, who would meddle with things on the Day of Judgment, unless care were taken to keep her out of the way, till the end. Emmi's voice must be artistically cultivated. It was my duty, I considered, to attend to this, all the more so as the Police-lieutenant's wife greatly persuaded me to do so, and told me that if Emmi were to join her daughter in taking lessons, the lady-teacher would make a great reduction in her charges. I should certainly not be a true German housewife could I have allowed such an opportunity to escape. No, when anything cheap is offered me I do not allow it to pass ; it is only those sixpenny bazaars that I dislike, and I shall never again buy any articles there, for in the end one has to lay out more in paste and cement than the whole rubbish is worth. Even Carl—to whom naturally I did not communicate the fact about the lessons till the second quarter's fees become due, and when it would have been a sin to interrupt the instruction—even Carl confessed that he had nothing to say against the price of the lessons. His admitting this much made me feel very well satisfied.

And Emmi certainly did make prodigious progress, as the lady herself assured me when she came to see me. "One more course, dear madam," she said, "and your daughter will be a match for Lucca. She already sings the high C with ease, and her roulades show such

liquidity that one might say she had the talent of an Artôt!" I was greatly delighted at this, and thought in my heart if Emmi becomes great and celebrated I shall die for joy. And why should not my daughter have this in prospect? Many a girl has become a great singer whose family were nothing like in the position that we are.

Frau Grün-Reifferstein was, moreover, the very teacher we could have wished for Emmi. She often told me and the Police-lieutenant's wife of her former stage life, and of the dangers that young singer's are exposed to. However, that she had always shown herself strong, had never lowered herself, not even when a prince offered her a left-handed marriage. She knew what young persons were exposed to behind the scenes when they had not previously been "fortified" for the stage—that she fortified her pupils just because she knew all the risks they ran. How overjoyed I was to think of Emmi in such good hands! Frau Heimreich's eldest girl—by her first marriage—was also studying with Frau Grün-Reifferstein, and this did not altogether please me; however, the girl was supposed to have some voice, and so there was no use saying anything, although the mother is a perfect horror to me.

One of the principals of Frau Grün-Reifferstein's Academy for Singing is to give an annual performance to enable parents to see what their children have accomplished. Relatives of the lady-students, as well as of the men-students—for there are men-students also—and their acquaintances and friends form the audience, and as the entrance is only one mark, of course the hall is always crammed full. A pretty stage is set up, and, as Frau Grün-Reifferstein says herself, the art is treated with elevated enthusiasm and grave propriety.

At this year's performance Emmi was to take part in the singing, and, moreover, to appear as Gabriele in the 'Night Watch at Granada'; first in the scene where the soldier brings her back the dove that had escaped, and then the scene where she throws stones at the sleeping soldier to warn him of the approaching bandits.

The excitement was very great. A whole month beforehand everything seemed to turn upon the coming performance, so much so that I had to forbid the girls to speak of it in their father's presence, for he got angry at the very mention of such words as rehearsal, costume, performance, &c. I cannot say, however, that I was indifferent to the matter. In the first place, I considered that all would depend upon the dress that Emmi wore. I was not going to allow her to appear in fantastic attire; so the dressmaker was called in, and we arranged for her to make a white satin dress in the latest fashion, with a train, which we decided should be trimmed with gold and red satin, as the scene of the opera was in Spain. Pretty little high-heeled boots also were not forgotten. Frau Grün-Reifferstein, I must say, did think the dress a little too splendid for the peasant-girl Emmi was to represent, but I answered very emphatically that my daughter should not appear a dowdy, and that unless she wore the dress I wished, she should not take part in the performance at all; so she gave in meekly enough. When you can do a thing well, you like people to know it!

Still it would, after all, have been better had that dress never been made. I feel enraged whenever I think of it.

Well, the day of the performance drew near, and, like all other great events, it actually arrived at last. We were a pretty large party of ourselves, for we took



with us all the Bergfeldts, the Krauses, and the Weigelts, as well as some other friends. Dr. Wrenzchen, to whom I had sent a card of invitation, begged us to excuse his not going, as he was unusually busy. That good man, however, never has time for anything when it doesn't suit his purpose. I afterwards heard that that same evening he had been out at Patzenhofers' playing *skat* with his friends; yet it is high time he were looking about for a nice wife. Well, I don't mean to press my girls upon him. But that's just the way with these medical men.

I accompanied Emmi to the dressing-room to help her dress. Frau Heimreich was there assisting her daughter, who was to take the part of Anne in the 'Freischütz.' Dear me what a sight the girl looked! I may add, aside, that the dress was not even quite clean; and who knows where Frau Heimreich may have borrowed it! Probably she got it on hire from some cheap costume dealer in the Brunnen Strasse or some such locality. It was a perfect drabbetail, and looked hideous. I took not the slightest notice of her.

When, however, she saw my daughter's dress she began to make personal remarks. "Your Emmi is going to appear as a court lady, I suppose," she said, addressing me rather snappishly. "No, she is not," said I very sharply, for there were other people in the room, and I wanted them to see that I was not going to be snubbed by any one, even though ten Frau Heimreiches had been there. "You must know, my dear, that I like propriety."—"Is that remark meant for me?" she exclaimed, advancing in front of her daughter, whom she wished to protect from my searching glance. "I did not mention any names," was my reply. "Really ladies," she cried out maliciously, "if Frau Buchholz wishes to say that we are none of us good

enough for her, I'm sure we're much obliged to her. However, we show ourselves as we are. To give oneself airs when there is nothing to boast of is not our way, thank goodness!"—"I too consider that Fräulein Buchholz has decked herself out much more than has ever been the custom here," exclaimed an oldish-looking girl, who was standing before a mirror powdering herself. "And so she has," added Frau Heimreich; "but, of course, when people have nothing else to show, they have to get themselves up like circus-riders!" This was too much for me, but I controlled myself, and said aloud to my daughter: "Never mind what those persons say; they turn up their eyes at a simple play acted in a doll's theatre, and yet cannot keep off the stage themselves. It is all pure envy." There was now a great uproar in the room, everyone was talking loudly, and Emmi burst into tears. There was a regular scene.

Frau Grün-Reifferstein had heard the quarrelling, and hurried from the stage to the dressing-room. It was with some difficulty that she managed to get a hearing. "Ladies," she exclaimed, "I beg you to settle this dispute after the performance; we shall have to begin at once, for the audience are already stamping their feet! I beg all those ladies who are not going to take part in the performance kindly to move to their seats in the hall." This was all very well; but my Emmi declared that she would not take any part in it now. "But, child," I exclaimed horrified, "the Bergfeldts, Krauses, and all the others have come simply to hear you; it wouldn't matter about other people grumbling. And think, too, of your new and expensive dress."—"I don't care," she sobbed; "I have been treated so badly that I shall not put a foot on to the stage."

Frau Grün-Reifferstein was in despair. "We can-

not possibly leave out that number ; you must sing.”—  
“No, I will not,” answered Emmi. “Oh, my dear young lady,” groaned Frau Grün ; then she added in a whisper to Emmi : “What will Herr Meyer say to this ?” Emmi hesitated for a moment, and then said slowly : “Well, perhaps I had better sing.”

Before I could ascertain what “Herr Meyer” had to do with the matter, Frau Grün had politely bowed us out of the room, and we found ourselves among the audience.

It was with a heavy heart that I took my seat. My vexation in the dressing-room had excited me more than I cared to admit to myself. And then, who was that Herr Meyer ? I could scarcely get him out of my head.

Frau Grün-Reifferstein sat down at the piano that stood at one side of the stage, behind a paper screen, and served as an orchestra, and then the entertainment began. Frau Heimreich’s girl, Elisabeth, and that oldish person who had insulted me in the dressing-room, trolled out the “duet and aria” from the ‘Freischütz.’ I could scarcely bear to listen to them. Elisabeth did not seem to know what to do with her hands, and sang so out of tune it would have made a dog howl to hear her ; moreover she opened her mouth so wide that it might have gone on opening right round her head, had her ears not stood in the way. And yet she was applauded, for all the Heimreich set clapped away with their hands like a lot of washing-bats. I never moved, and when Frau Bergfeldt, who was sitting by me, was about to clap too, I held her hands down for her. Frau Heimreich saw this and gave me a look that didn’t promise much good.

Then came Emmi’s turn. Yes, there it was on the programme, “Gabrielle, Fräulein Buchholtz ; A Yäger,

Herr Meyer!" The curtain rose. Herr Meyer in a soldier's dress came forward and sang; a lanky creature, whose head almost touched the ceiling, and who, owing to a sort of internal panic, kept rolling his eyes from right to left as if he had a bad conscience. The door of the cottage opened and Emmi appeared. A loud "Oh!" went round the hall, and a weight seemed to fall from my heart, for I felt she was admired.

Emmi commenced to sing. When, however, she ought to have advanced to the soldier, she could not move as her train had caught something behind the scenes. The girl became confused and stopped singing. The soldier saw the accident and gallantly loosened her train for her. The audience laughed, and I heard Frau Heimreich's voice above every one's. Emmi began again from the beginning; it was very depressing. Carl whispered to me, "This is the first and last time that Emmi joins in any such performance." When the curtain fell there was not a sound of applause. Only Frau Bergfeldt, whom I had begged to do so beforehand, applauded with might and main. Every one turned their eyes upon us. I felt as if I should have liked to sink into the ground. The Heinsreichs were all laughing loudly and contemptuously.

After a short pause came the second scene. In the centre of the stage stood a small sofa without a back, this served the soldier as a couch; on the left was a bit of scenery representing a house with a window above, and from this window Emmi was to sing her song. Meyer had finished his part and lay down on the sofa, which however was so short for him that his legs dangled a good way beyond the end of it. The audience seemed much amused. Emmi then appeared at the window and began her part and threw a stone at the soldier. To get a better aim the poor child leant too

far out, and the bit of scenery moved forward and fell down slowly—I feel giddy whenever I think of it—carrying Emmi with it, right upon the sleeping soldier. The little table upon which she had been standing had given way; her high-heeled boots were no doubt partly to blame, and so also was her train. I hurried on to the stage. Fortunately Emmi had not hurt herself; but that Herr Meyer was tenderly holding her in his arms and consoling her by saying: “Darling Emmi, thank God that it’s no worse. I’ll throttle that stage-manager.” Fancy that creature calling my child his darling Emmi! The scales dropped from my eyes.

Frau Grün had gone on to the stage to assure the audience that no one had been hurt; she now returned.

“So this is the way you fortify your pupils for the stage!” I at once began, “you allow the young girls entrusted to your care to have their heads turned by your men-pupils?” She merely replied: “Madam, it seems you are totally unacquainted with theatrical concerns. Moreover, I consider Herr Meyer a good match for your daughter—he has talent, and may get on very well.”

I turned my back upon her coldly and went with Emmi to the dressing-room and helped her in changing her dress. She had to make her confession. I then learned that it was the regular custom among the male and female pupils at Frau Grün-Reifferstein’s Academy to fall in love with each other. This was considered part of their artistic training, for it was supposed that they could not describe sentiment faithfully unless they had felt deeply themselves. Very pretty idea, that!

It now appears I ought never to have believed Frau Grün from the outset; that eternal singing about love and nothing but love, and those plays where the talk is

again always about love, must in the end lead inexperienced young people into mischief. And yet that woman was supposed to warn her pupils of the dangers of the stage and to "fortify" them. Abominable!

We drove home. Carl was very much put out. He did not even scold, but I saw plainly how much the whole affair had vexed him. And he did not yet know anything about that man Meyer.

I considered it my duty, however, to tell him about it.

"Wilhelmine," said he in reply, "this is all the result of your folly. Why is it that you are always seeking for happiness outside of your own sphere? What's the use of forcing yourself into relations that don't suit us?"

"My object was to do my best for Emmi; I thought she might one day become great and celebrated as a singer," I replied amid tears.

"We shall now have to think of something very different," said Carl, "we shall have to pack the girl off somewhere, she shall not be exposed to the mock sympathy of acquaintances. You will have to see that she forgets that man Meyer; one of that Grün-Reifferstein set, I tell you plainly, I won't have as a son-in-law."

So we discussed the matter and considered that the best plan would be for me to take Emmi away to the sea-side.

The girl can scarcely be induced to stir out of doors; she feels so ashamed and dreads being laughed at by her acquaintances, she won't even take a short walk out towards the Friedrichs-hain; so there is nothing for it but to leave Parnassus alone, and to wend our way to the cool shores of the Baltic. Our dream of celebrity and greatness has come to a sad end, and I have come to see that mere air doesn't make a good foundation either for a castle or a cottage, for airy it is

sure to remain. But, of course, if the Police-lieutenant's wife had not persuaded me, and that Grün-Reiferstein woman had not been so plausible, I should never have allowed Emmi to appear in public. It was only a private performance, to be sure, but all our acquaintances were present, and that is even worse than a public appearance.

It was absolutely necessary that I should take the girl away, and so the sooner the better.

Before we left home I paid the young Weigelts a visit. I had put off this visit long enough, though it was due if only as a matter of common civility.

Frau Bergfeldt had often said to me : "Frau Buchholz, why have you never once been to see my married daughter? You know the girl was always fond of you." For several reasons, however, I had not gone.

In the first place, it was only a piece of arrogance on Frau Bergfeldt's part, and probably she simply wanted to boast of having a married daughter, while neither of mine were as yet thinking of such a thing; therefore, in a polite way, of course, I avoided doing as she wished, and had never yet paid the Weigelts a visit. In the second place, I am too æsthetic in my tastes to care for abodes of poverty, so to speak. Goodness me! The Bergfeldts had scarcely enough to make both ends meet as it was. The wedding-party had cost a good deal; he, Weigelt, had his miserable salary at the law-court, and she, Augusta, could have had only what was absolutely necessary given to her at her marriage. Taking all together, there could not be much more than what the poets call an abode of poverty.

Still, even a most modest abode with simple domestic arrangements can be made a pleasant place if everything is kept neat, clean, and in good order; but, as Augusta had always been a spoiled child, never liking

to soil her hands; I could easily imagine what sort of house hers would be, and made up my mind to avoid seeing it as long as I possibly could.

Nor did I allow my girls to go to the Weigelts; I told them it was the correct thing to leave young married folks to themselves. There was, however, another and better reason still for my hesitating about paying the visit.

Frau Bergfeldt had made the match between the two by the help of Bilsse's concerts, so that the marriage could not be said to be hallowed by real love; and further, Augusta, on the evening before her wedding, had acted so rudely to her betrothed that even the Police-lieutenant's wife had remarked at the time: "See if she doesn't have the upper hand there!" A marriage where kicks and bickerings take the place of affection is not a sight for *my* children. It's a sin to make young growing girls shy of marrying.

But I could now no longer put off making the call, and then I was just a little curious to see whether I and the Police-lieutenant's wife had prophesied rightly; so I made myself a little smart and went off along the Landsberger Strasse and turned into the Acker Strasse. It was a longish way off, and just as I left home it began to rain. It came down like the spray that Klinkerfues invented, and, although not heavy, was cold, wet, and horrid. Pleasant, the walk was certainly not.

When I got to the Acker Strasse I had to look about for the house, and this it was no easy matter to find amid the many churchyards between the houses.

At last I discovered the number I wanted. The house itself looked respectable enough from the outside; but, oh! those steep narrow stairs that I had to mount, those wretched entrances on each floor, the miserable door-handles, the sickly bluish-grey walls, the shaky banis-



ters! It was easy to see that the outside had been devised with a view to investors, and the inside for poverty.

On reaching the fourth floor I was so out of breath that I had scarcely strength to pull the bell.

Fortunately Augusta must have heard some one mounting her turret, for she opened the door at once, and when she saw me called out in great glee :

“Oh! how good of you to come and see me.”—  
“Wait a minute till I get back my breath,” I replied with some difficulty as she took off my cloak and bonnet. “Your stairs are really frightfully steep.”

“That they are,” replied Augusta; “but we don’t mind them so very much,” whereupon she looked at me with a cheerful smile.

It was well I had already sat down, for I was rather taken aback by her answer.

Could Augusta, who used always to sulk at anything she did not like, suddenly be content with this ladder of a staircase? Before I could make any further remark, she said: “I’ll go and make you a cup of good hot coffee; it will do you good in this unpleasant weather;” and off she flew.

I had now time to study the room thoroughly. It was not large, but neither was it small, only a little too low for any one accustomed to more height. The table-cover was white and clean, on the chest of drawers stood the lamp with an album beside it. There were not too many things anywhere, but yet not too few either.

At the window stood the work-table. Inquisitive as I was, I went over to see what kind of work Augusta might be at. I felt as if a monkey were on my back when I lifted a handkerchief which she had thrown over her work—bright-coloured feather flowers!

Augusta returned with the coffee-tray just as I had got back to my chair and had somewhat recovered from my amazement. She flitted to and fro, fetching first one thing and then another. Cakes, too, were put out for me on a little plate, and then she made the coffee.

"Child," I exclaimed in surprise, "do not take it ill, but where have you learned all these clever little ways? You usen't to be like this."

She was silent for a moment, and then said: "Many a thing can be learned when it has to be done." Aha, thought I, her husband, no doubt, keeps her well in order. But I soon put that thought out of my head, for, after all, he was never much better than a timid sheep. The coffee was very good for the Acker Strasse, but probably Augusta had put in an extra bean or two to show off before me. That was always the Bergfeldts way, to speak only of the mother.

Augusta asked me if I minded her bringing out her work while we chatted. "I suppose you make all sorts of things nowadays you never thought of doing before," said I, smiling. "Well, yes," she answered, placing a box of gaily coloured feathers on the table, and then began nimbly to form them into flowers.

"But, child," I exclaimed, "whatever are you making these flowers for?"—"I am only too pleased to tell you," was her reply, "for you are, after all, a dear old friend; yet I shouldn't like every one to know. I make the flowers for a city warehouse and earn some money by it. It is not much, but it's something."

"You surely don't need to work for money? Your husband has his salary?" said I.

"We might make it do if we arranged accordingly, but——"

"Well, but what?" I asked.

"The fact is, we have debts to pay off," she said in

a low voice, and coloured up. "Our sofa is not quite paid off yet, and the chairs——"

"I thought your parents had undertaken to furnish the rooms for you."

Augusta's face became redder. "Mother got the things on hire. The wedding was expensive, new dresses were bought, and many unnecessary things too; and then the landlord did, after all, summon father on account of the disturbance the evening before our wedding. Their having to move will be an additional expense, and, as you know, father has no capital to fall back upon."

She was not telling me much more than I already knew. To console her I said: "If your parents can't settle matters about the furniture just at present, they will do so later on. Those sort of people give credit till doomsday."

"Mother had promised the furniture-dealer more than she could manage. This annoyed him. He came to us one day, and wanted to carry off the furniture, and made a horrible scene. The people on the other floors were standing about the staircase, and seemed to enjoy hearing the man's insolent language, and we could not get rid of him till Franz threatened to summon him for creating a disturbance."

"But you managed to get rid of him?"

"Yes; but the disgrace has stuck to us. The people on the other floors denounced us in a most heartless way. To me it seemed as if all pleasantness had vanished from our little home, never to return. I scarcely ventured to look my husband in the face." Augusta had to dry her tears, which rose with the remembrance of the painful scenes.

"And what did your husband say? Of course he was terribly angry?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Augusta, and her whole face brightened up, "he hadn't an unkind word either for mother or me. He merely said, as he took my hands in his, with a sad look: 'Augusta, would it not have been better to have told me honestly how matters stood? Everything might then have been arranged peaceably.' I laid my head on his shoulder and cried: 'Forgive me, Franz, and I will never again keep anything from you,' and promised to be as open with him as he has always been with me."

"That is very good of you," said I; "but I cannot conceive how such a fuss should have been made about a few bits of furniture."

"It was the first trouble I had brought upon Franz since I got to love him."

I could not help smiling. "Well," said I, "as an engaged man I cannot say he has had the happiest of days with you."

Augusta blushed more than she had yet done. "Mother chose him for me," she replied, somewhat ashamed, but earnestly and firmly, as if she meant to defend herself. "In my foolishness I mistook my friendly feeling towards him for what people call love."

"Mere friendly feeling then?"

"Not quite that even. The fact is, I wanted to be engaged, and mother wished it too, and as Franz seemed the easiest to be got, the lot fell upon him. Had he broken off the engagement afterwards, I should have been wild with rage at the moment, but should not have been really grieved about it."

"And do you really love him now?"

"Above all things," she replied with beaming eyes. "Is he not my husband?"—and she bent down over her flowers a little embarrassed, as if she had been saying too much, and worked away faster than ever.

Augusta seemed to me quite inexplicable, she was so changed. Yet, though it was raining still, I determined to be off home. Augusta pressed me to remain till her Franz came in—she expected him every minute; but when she saw that I was not to be persuaded, she insisted upon showing me all their rooms. That was, of course, an inducement.

Next to the sitting-room was a small apartment with one window. It contained several bookcases, a writing-table, and an armchair. This was the study. The kitchen was on the other side, and next to it an empty room.

“Have you got no servant?” I asked.

“We can’t afford one at present,” she replied; “but I’ve got hands and arms of my own.”

The bedroom was very comfortable. The beds looked neat and seemed to be good, the mattresses were well filled with feathers. Augusta went up to one of the beds and passed her hand over the cover, although there wasn’t a crease to be seen. “That’s your Franz’s bed, I suppose,” said I.

“Yes,” was her reply.

Just as I was going Herr Weigelt came in. We exchanged salutations, and he gave his wife a kiss, she looking the picture of happiness. I took a good look at the young man, but must confess he seemed to me as great a ninny as ever, and I soon took my leave.

“He doesn’t take my fancy,” said I to myself, as I groped my way down the steep stairs; “yet he seems the right fellow for Augusta. Well, we’ll wait and see whether their honeymoon lasts for ever.”

As I passed out into the drizzling rain I felt chilly, and the rain seemed colder than before; in fact it seemed to me almost as if I had been sitting in warm sunshine up in that top flat, and yet their windows face the north, and heavy grey clouds obscured the sky.

## LIFE AT THE SEA-SIDE.

HERE I am in Flunderndorf with my Emmi, far from lovely Berlin, where of an evening one can have one's garden concert, one's white beer, and all the rest of it —Berlin, with all its attractions, of which the people here can have no idea, not even in a dream. "Oh, Berlin, how I long for a sight of thee!"

You may be surprised that, after so short an absence, a kind of poetic home-sickness should already have come over me; and you are sure to think that if I and my daughter had gone to Misdroy or to Heringsdorf, we should not have missed Berlin so much; it was, however, just because I wished to escape from Berlin altogether that I had to choose a little-frequented watering-place on the Baltic; and this, in fact, is just what Flunderndorf is. Anywhere else we should have met acquaintances, who might at all events have heard of Emmi's unfortunate appearance at the Grün-Reiffenstein's operatic performance; and such meetings were just what we wanted to avoid. Or would you like to be the talk of everybody?

There was another reason, however, for my coming here. I had heard that Dr. Wrenzchen came to Flunderndorf every year for sea-bathing. Now, as young people usually get to know each other very well at a sea-side place, having, as it were, to make the best of one another, of course all sorts of possibilities flitted through my mind as I packed our boxes. There could be no doubt that it was becoming absolutely necessary for Dr. Wrenzchen to have a well-regulated domestic establishment, for we had heard recently that he had again celebrated his birthday with the most luxurious and unheard-of extravagance. Uncle Fritz said that it

was enough to make one's hair stand on end, and that anything more unusual than the way the doctor celebrates his birthday could not be conceived. Now, if he married my Emmi he might spend the day with us very pleasantly, with a cake for breakfast, a small party of ladies to coffee in the afternoon, and a pint of beer with sliced bread tastily decorated in the evening. I would soon make him drop his extravagant ways; his boon companions too would have to move off as soon as they caught sight of me.

It is very beautiful here in Flunderndorf; but everything is dreadfully primitive. To mention only the beds; they are stuffed with sea-grass, yet one might fancy one were lying on last year's potatoes; and the covers are thick and heavy enough to suffocate one. My plan in bed is to throw off all but a single sheet; and this, I hear, is what the visitors usually do; for of a morning when one meets one's acquaintances, the first questions are: How have you rested? Have you been troubled by many midges, or not?—Were you badly bitten, or not? At a sea-side place people show themselves just as they are, perfectly natural; and it is this principally—of course together with the salt in the air and sea—that acts beneficially upon one's health.

To make a rough guess, we are about forty visitors in all, and as life is cheap in Flunderndorf, as a matter of course there is no Bleichröder\* among us. A good many persons take lodgings in the fishermen's cottages, where the so-called best rooms are let out by the week or month. Others take rooms at the hotel and meet at dinner. On the beach there are bathing machines, and along the shore is a wooden shed open towards the sea, where a sniff of sea air can be had even in bad weather. When the sun shines every one plays on the

\* A notorious female swindler recently tried in Berlin.

sand, ladies and gentlemen as well as children. I would not condescend to do this at first, but now I grub away bravely myself. Moreover, I have come to see that it's just as well for a few elderly ladies to join in this playing among the sand.

Besides ourselves there is only one other family here from Berlin, and they have clearly come for health's sake. The husband looks a mere shadow, and the wife and little daughter one would fancy did not often get a mouthful of fresh air. With human beings it's the same as with clothes, it is evident at once when they have been hanging up long in the dark.

These people have no doubt seen better days. I have several times tried to say a few friendly words to them, for naturally one likes to know what people one goes into the sea with ; but it is always a "touch me not" with them, a regular polar iceberg with a polar bear on it.

There is, however, another lady from Hamburg with a little son, who at once became friendly with us. A very pleasant lady she is, and always beautifully dressed. The other day she had a costume on, embroidered all over in black and white ; the effect was splendid, and there were large bunches of pansies too about it, one in front, one behind, and one on the body to the left. Emmi and I were in raptures about it. This lady also wears magnificent jewelry, all of massive gold as she herself said. She told me that most of it had been given to her as birthday presents ; she did not approve of buying such things herself. It was but natural that I should say a few words in praise of her generous husband, whereupon she gave me a poke in the ribs with her elbow, and laughed. When I expressed my surprise at this, she told me that her husband was away from home doing a roaring business in



foreign parts, and that she and little Hannis, as the boy was called, lived as a rule quietly in Hamburg. She was kind enough to say that she would have liked me to pay her a visit there, but while her husband was away she was living in apartments.

Little Hannis was very affectionate with Emmi, but was always asking for presents. The child seemed to fancy that as he had so many kind "aunties" in Hamburg who gave him toys and goodies, Emmi ought to be a kind "auntie" too. The elegant lady, however, on one occasion gave the boy Hannis a good box on the ear, and cried out in a vulgar dialect: "You young brat you, hold your tongue this minute!" which silenced the child at once. Elegant as this Hamburg lady is in her attire, she certainly does treat our German language in a disgracefully ungrammatical way, as I noticed more than once.

The other lady-visitors keep very much to themselves. When not bathing, they amuse themselves by looking for shells and amber, or take a walk in the woods on the strip of land that forms the Flunderndorf Bay, and gather wild flowers.

Among the visitors is a young lady from Stettin who is extremely pretty. Our elegant Hamburg acquaintance said, in speaking of her, that she might make her fortune with her good looks. This remark seemed to strike me to the quick, and made me think of Dr. Wrenzen's approaching arrival, for I had heard he was generally expected about this time. I asked her if she did not think my Emmi rather pretty and whether her prospects might not be as good as those of the good-looking Stettin girl?

Her reply was that Emmi was certainly very nice looking, but that a great deal depended upon voice and dress.

This answer ruffled me more than I allowed her to perceive, for, of course, I supposed she was alluding to Emmi's mishap at the Grün-Reifferstein's performance. What else could she have meant by Emmi's voice and dress?

We took leave of her somewhat coolly after this, and left her and her boy Hannis on the beach.

In going through the village we accidentally passed the cottage where Dr. Wrenzchen was in the habit of taking up his quarters; so I could not do otherwise than inquire whether he had yet arrived or when he was expected. The man at the cottage informed us that the gentleman from Berlin would probably arrive late that same evening. So I said to Emmi: "Tomorrow you put on your cream-coloured dress, and make yourself as smart as possible. The doctor will be desperately pleased at the attention."

So far all had gone well, but an occurrence was about to happen that I had never dreamt of. Of course not a mortal creature was to blame but that doctor; at all events, no one can say that I had any reason to find fault with myself.

Next morning we were up early. I dressed Emmi in a way that even the Stettin girl would have found it difficult to match. The weather was glorious. A thin haze lay over the sea, but gradually got more and more transparent, till at last the sea lay like a mirror before us reflecting the sun's rays. And the sky was so blue, you might have fancied you were looking at a newly painted kitchen cupboard. It was a landscape excellent in tone, as the critics are always saying in the notices of the Art Exhibition.

Now my plan was to go and give Dr. Wrenzchen a friendly welcome, to tell him how delighted we were at his coming, to keep him by us all day, and to invite him

to cold roast veal in the evening. This, of course, we could easily do as he was our medical man and we were on friendly terms with him ; it can never be said to be out of place to show some attention to a person who may more than once have saved your life. I meant also to beg him to give me and Emmi a lesson in the game of *skat*, the rest might be left to me. Fried potatoes, which he likes, he should, of course, also have had. But of what use are one's best intentions, one's loveliest plans, when those whom it all concerns prove wicked ?

I gave the boy at the cottage a penny, and commissioned him to bring me word as soon as ever the gentleman from Berlin arose in the morning. Emmi and I waited in our garden and each of us gathered a nosegay. What feelings a mother's heart cherishes, when gathering flowers on the morning of the day which will probably decide her child's future, it is impossible to describe ; yet all mothers who know how difficult it is nowadays to get the right husband for a daughter, may perhaps imagine what filled my mind as I thought to myself : Here you are sitting in the garden among the flowers ; beside you is your child, over yonder in that cottage lies the doctor asleep, and the sun has risen and is standing in all his glory high above us all. How much wiser shall we all be when the sun has gone down ?

Just then the boy from the cottage came running up, exclaiming : " He's been a-moving and a-singing too he he has, allays up and down ! If y're a bit quick, ye may catch him yet."

" Did you know that Dr. Wrenzchen could sing ?" said I to Emmi.

" Oh, he has probably only been amusing himself," she replied, and with these words we set off to give the doctor the surprise we had prepared for him by way of a morning greeting.

His window was open. "Now, Emmi," I whispered, and with that we both flung our nosegays in at the window.

"Thank you, ladies," shouted an unknown voice, and the man to whom the voice belonged then made his appearance. It was Herr Meyer, the would-be opera singer, on whose very account, only a few days before, we had fled from Berlin!

"Sir," I cried, furious, "how dare you venture to follow us?"—"My good madam, let me ask you not to excite yourself. I came to Flunderndorf for my health and at my doctor's advice; he, in fact, directed me to this house, for, as he told me, he should have no time this year for a trip to the sea himself."

"Your doctor?" I cried incredulously.

"Certainly," was the answer, "Dr. Wrenzchen very kindly——" I did not let him finish his sentence, however, but took Emmi by the hand and dragged her off.

It was impossible for me to have a bathe that morning; so upset did I feel, I should very likely have had a stroke in the water. Emmi was quite gone again upon that lanky idiot of a singer, having just seen him, so that I may say we were now no further than we had been to begin with.

We shall have to be off from here—but where to? To think of Dr. Wrenzchen playing us such a trick!

After Table d'Hôte.

We are going to remain! Our elegant Hamburg acquaintance has offered that man Meyer an engagement; we have discovered that she is the lessee of a music-hall or some *café chantant* where more attention is devoted to eating and drinking than to art. Meyer is going to appear there. To think of our having been on intimate terms with such a person! This degradation

of Meyer's has enabled Emmi to sweep all her admiration of the man out of her heart as if it had been seaweed; to me this is a real mercy, and I feel truly thankful. He is to give a *soirée* this evening in the hotel *salon*, but, of course, we shall not be there.

We are, in fact, going for a walk with those people from Berlin whom we at first thought so poverty-stricken in their appearance. It turns out that he is a member of the Judicial Court, has aristocratic connections, and is living here in a most unpretentious kind of way with his family. Now as this is what I am doing myself, we are sure to get on, for nature draws congenial minds more closely together than art does, most likely because no feelings of envy come in the way. There is something very dignified about these people, even when they are taking their thickened milk with black bread. The judge's wife had noticed this morning that Emmi had been crying (N.B., about Meyer), and it was this that first led to our striking up an acquaintance. She was so sympathetic, and he too opened up and became quite sociable; the fact is, they had not liked the people we had taken up with at first, and so kept out of our way.

The doctor shall suffer for all this. I only wish I were his mother-in-law already!

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#### A NEW YEAR AGAIN.

Was it that Fate had ceased to throw stones on to Frau Buchholz's pathway in life, or were there other reasons that kept her from writing? This much is certain, since her letter from Flunderndorf nothing had been heard of her. The summer had passed and late autumn had brought the last holiday folk back to Berlin, stoves

were again being heated, and the days were drawing in as is their wont in winter. The old year was preparing to depart, as all its predecessors had done ; it was becoming hoary, weak, and miserable. An old year on the verge of departing has a mournful appearance, when one considers that it was once young and has had a childhood like human beings, who are fated likewise to dwindle to dust, unless by some exceptional chance, one is preserved in a museum.

What becomes of these old years ? Somewhere they must surely be. We know, of course, that with the stroke of twelve on new year's eve they dip down into the sea of oblivion ; at all events, this has been stated often enough in the newspapers, whose truthfulness I have no reason whatever to doubt. Still it is not very clear to me why the old years do not choose a warmer season for this final dip.

That the old years should not return from the past is not to be wondered at ; are they not blamed for everything that has gone wrong ? It is generally said of them that they were bad and good for nothing ; precisely the reverse of what is said of mankind, who are invariably well spoken of after death, except, of course, those that are hanged. Yet think of the joy with which a new year is greeted, although all we can possibly know of it at the time is, whether it is a leap-year or not, and that is little enough.

I know of only one young man who did not speak favourably of new years. He declared they usually began with headaches. This remark has been confirmed by others, I confess. But why then find fault with the old years, which generally end so merrily ? We must, moreover, bear in mind that years can never become properly developed ; their span of life is too short. I remember having a discussion with a very

learned man as to whether it would be possible to make the years three or four times as long as they are at present. He maintained that this could not possibly be done, were it only on account of the taxes. This man was a political economist and must have known. He further declared that no alteration could be made on account of the new year's bills. But I myself know of persons who never think of settling their bills at the new year, and was much surprised, therefore, to find a learned political economist wholly ignorant of what appeared to me the simplest facts.

He promised me to go the round of the mercantile houses to obtain material for a statistical statement of unpaid new year's bills ; that is to say, as soon as he had finished an important work he had then in hand. He was at that time engaged in calculating how high a malt-tax might be raised, if it were possible to grow corn on the side of the moon which is turned towards us. When he had settled this point he meant to take the other side of the moon in consideration, and anticipated that his report would create a great sensation in the scientific world.

He did not, however, pretend to know what became of the old years. I, therefore, appealed to a poet, for, after all, it is the poets who speak of the old years dipping into the sea of oblivion. Now there are two species of poets : those who cannot keep from writing poetry because their genius drives them to it, and those who have a fit only at the new year, I mean a fit of poetising. Those who are driven to it by their genius wear their hair very long, having no time to spare for hairdressers. They can be seen at a distance quickly enough for any one to get out of their way, if one happens to meet them. The others who write poetry occasionally, often regret afterwards the time spent upon

their verse-making, particularly when, in place of receiving the expected honorarium, they receive a notice to the effect that their verses will be published only as a special favour. It is, in fact, unfortunate that verse-making was invented before the patent laws. Much larger fortunes could have been made by such licences than by patent artificial liquorice made of hard gum, a single stick of which is enough to serve a large family for a lifetime.

The poets, however, could not tell me what became of the old years. They said they did not trouble themselves about things which they had—as it were—sung to the grave. The main point with them was correct rhythm. I could not help regarding this assertion as a most heartless one.

At last I asked a dear old lady with snow-white hair, and a face still beautiful, although every successive year had of late left another furrow upon it. Her answer was : “ My dear young man, the old years turn into the good old times. They all return again as memory, and then they look brighter than ever before.”—“ Grandmother,” said I, “ but what about the dipping ? ” She smiled, and said : “ This is how it is : When the years have dipped into oblivion, they lose all the evil and harshness they possessed, and only their goodness and loveliness remain, however little it may be, and all this is spread out before our inward eye. When a gorgeous sunset is colouring the whole sky, do we think of the dull rain in the morning ? No, it seems to us as if the whole day had been beautiful, and we are no longer discontented. So it is with the years, they turn into the good old times.”

This is probably the case. For whence, otherwise, should we have the good old times, if they are not formed of the years that have gone ? And as far as I re-



member, the old days are never spoken of—except as good!

Frau Buchholz also had been busy, since her return from Flunderndorf, ransacking the treasures of her memory. Some years ago, accompanied by her husband and her brother Fritz, she had been to Italy, the salubrious climate of that country had been recommended to Herr Buchholz by Dr. Wrenzchen for his rheumatism; and while her recent travelling experiences were rising up in her mind as good old times, she was making an endeavour to jot down on paper the impressions made upon her by her sojourn in the Sunny South. It was in this way that she came to write her book: 'The Buchholzes in Italy.' No untoward circumstance disturbed her in her work, and the days, weeks and months passed in peace and contentment. Perhaps Frau Buchholz's life remained thus untroubled, because she had too little spare time to be on the look-out for unpleasantnesses.

However, the old year was not to pass altogether without vexation—it did not take its dip into oblivion till it had revealed a disagreeable inheritance which it left in Frau Buchholz's hands. The first day of the new year of 1882 had scarcely begun when the postman again brought a letter from the Landsberger Strasse.

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#### HERR BERGFELDT'S MISFORTUNE.

THIS letter of mine will reach you on New Year's morning if Stephan's\* postal machinery is as well oiled as usual.

If you only knew with what feelings I now take up

\* The Postmaster-General of Germany.

my pen! Oh, could I only have come with a more cheerful New Year's greeting! Were I to be photographed just now and to send you my likeness, you would, I'm sure, exclaim: "Goodness gracious! what can be the matter with Frau Buchholz? She looks as if she'd swallowed a pot full of mice!"

Of course it's again the Bergfeldts' fault, especially hers. He, Herr Bergfeldt, is a nice sort of man. His salary might be enough for them, and he earns a little extra by auditing the books of some tradesmen and workpeople.

But that woman Bergfeldt! It's perfectly inconceivable to me how he could ever have married her; he, one might say, is somewhat of a cultivated man, whereas there's not a particle of culture about her. Of course persons like her never take up an edifying book or an instructive newspaper, but sit the whole day drinking coffee and eating cakes. Her household affairs suffer in consequence, and the result is that what the husband makes is not enough for them. It's a rare thing, I admit, for a wife to make a little extra with her pen, and, of course, in the case of a woman like Frau Bergfeldt is not to be expected.

In short, the Bergfeldts' affairs are not in the state they ought to be, and I have long since noticed that he had some worry. She does not trouble herself much about the matter, you may be sure.

They had extra outlays at the time of Augusta's wedding, and have, in fact, got into debt. On account of the uproar made in their rooms on the wedding-eve, the landlord gave them notice to quit, and they have had to look out for new quarters. What an expense a removal is in Berlin may be gathered from the jeremiads of all those who have had to make a change of residence. Those huge furniture waggons may verily

be said to be the grave of one's possessions, especially of glass and china.

Emil is still at his law studies, and that he should be engaged to my Betti is one of the most preposterous things possible. That woman Bergfeldt knew all about it and ought not to have tolerated the love-making; that tomfoolery first showed signs of growth in her house, whereas circumstances forced me to give my yea and amen to a bond which is my greatest vexation in life. And yet there seems little prospect of getting it broken off, for Betti is more stubborn about her love for Emil than about anything else!

In my vexation, however, I have often tried to believe that things might yet end well, for there have been cases where clever lawyers have at last received some high appointment. Still, when I looked at Emil with the view to see whether he had gumption enough in him to make a governor or minister, he did not strike me as being up to it mentally; yet I must confess that in outward appearance he has become a fine-looking young fellow. But surely that everlasting twirling of his moustache is not a sign of any earnest onward striving of the mind. It would require something beyond that to enable him to become a judge—talent more especially. It must also be admitted that, considering that that woman Bergfeldt was the mother of the family, the children may think themselves lucky in being able to read, write and to understand the first four rules in arithmetic. My Betti, when only ten years old, recited a French poem to her father on his birthday, and moreover did it so well that the governess declared that a born Parisian could not have done it better. But the Bergfeldts, of course, never could afford to let their children have French lessons. It is because of this difference in the characters of Betti and

Emil, that I consider it my duty to put off their marriage as far as possible.

Meanwhile, thank Heaven, there is not the smallest thought of it at present ; for the Bergfeldts are just now in terrible straits. I have for some time past observed that something was wrong there, for Herr Bergfeldt has visibly been getting thinner. From time to time he has come to discuss matters with Carl, and after he has gone my Carl had the same anxious expression of face as Herr Bergfeldt had himself.

“Carl,” said I one day, “you have some secret between you, you and your friend Bergfeldt. I am not inquisitive, but I will know what this is ; I can see how it has got hold of you and worries you too.”—“Wilhelmine,” replied Carl earnestly, “it is not my secret, but belongs to my dear old friend, and therefore you will not hear a syllable about it from me.”—“Carl, is that the way you speak to your wife ?”—“Wilhelmine, I beg you not to get excited.”—“I excited ! Certainly not, your secret doings are not worth that. But this much I may tell you, that the next time your friend Bergfeldt comes, I’ll——”—“You’ll do what ?”—“I’ll give him as pretty plain a bit of German as ever was heard in the Landsberger Strasse !”

Carl laughed outright.

“Carl,” said I, “I beg you to treat the mother of your children with some respect.”—“There is no reasoning with you to-day, Wilhelmine,” said he, and then added, “You need not wait supper for me.” And off he went.

I let him go with never a word, and on the children’s account pretended that I didn’t miss him. When eleven o’clock came without his coming in, we all went to bed. What else is there to do but to go to bed ? To grown-up people bed may be said to take

the place of a mother's lap—a poor enough substitute I confess, and without a sympathetic heart. If one goes to sleep it doesn't perhaps matter much how or where one may happen to lie ; but the going to sleep is, after all, the main point. A pillow has never a kind word, never strokes your cheek or head, doesn't close your eyes with a gentle kiss, sings you no lullaby, and moreover is often spiteful enough to slip from under your head at the very moment when sleep seems about coming.

I have often gone to bed without waiting up for my Carl, and was always glad when he came in earlier than I had calculated upon. But he had no secrets from me then, no secrets for which those wretched Bergfeldts were to blame, that robbed me of my sleep and drove my husband away to some restaurant. This secret was just as if a wall had been built up between us.

Could I have supposed anything else than that Frau Bergfeldt was the cause of all this mischief? How I detested that woman surpasses all description. If I had her here I would tell her my mind pretty plainly.

Twice already had I shaken up my pillow and yet Carl had not come in. Then the clock struck one. "Well," thought I to myself, "and so Carl is to become a drunkard and a rake owing to that woman. My poor children! they will no longer have any respect for their father, and he will sink lower and lower when he finds that the affection of those belonging to him is day by day getting colder. But this you must vow, Wilhelmine—that even though you may no longer be able to love him, you will never withdraw your sympathy from him, however far things may go." This I said to myself and then cried bitterly, thinking of the misery before me.

Just then Carl came in.

I pretended to be asleep. He lit the candle, drew off

his boots and undressed as if nothing whatever had happened. Not a word, or a look, or a kind greeting had he for me. Then he got into his bed and put out the light. I felt everything dark and dreary round about and within me ; I could have died in my utter unhappiness.

"Are you crying, Wilhelmine?" Carl asked after a time.

I could not answer—there was such a lump in my throat. I had to cry and to go on crying or I should have choked.

"Wilhelmine, what is the matter with you?" said Carl. "You quite frighten me—shall I get you a seidlitz powder?"

"No," I sobbed, "I'm not ill, but miserable—so wretchedly miserable and unhappy."

"Wilhelmine, what has happened?" said Carl, and I distinctly heard him raise himself as if about to get out of bed.

"Nothing," I replied ; "lie down and be quiet. You needn't be anxious about me! What's your wife to you ; you care more for the Bergfeldts?"

"You are very foolish, Wilhelmine," said Carl sternly.

"No, I'm not," I replied. "You have secrets with the Bergfeldts that you keep from me, and a terrible thing it must be if you can't tell it to her who has been your companion through life. But there's an end to everything now ; everything, everything!"

Carl remained silent for a moment and then said : "I should never have given you credit for such foolishness as this, Wilhelmine. My friend Bergfeldt is in great trouble, and he has only been confiding in me, his old school-fellow, knowing that I will stand by him as far as I can. His wife even doesn't know anything about it."

"Doesn't she really?" I said, interrupting him.

"No," replied Carl; "there are troubles which a man must bear alone, without even revealing them to the wife he loves. They are troubles which he hopes to overcome and to keep down, troubles that he has to battle against alone so that they may not bring sorrow upon other people. How much more burdensome life would be to women, if their husbands were to tell them of every unpleasant thing that occurred in their business, of every trouble in their struggle for existence! And how wretched a woman can make her husband's life by dishing up every petty domestic annoyance she meets with, by repeating in detail every quarrel she has had with her servant, and by wishing him to avenge every grievance she has with a neighbour! Let each settle things in their own department, that there may be sunshine in the house during the hours when the family are together, for these hours ought to be devoted to relaxation and quiet."

"You are perhaps right, Carl," I said, "still it's my opinion that when the master of the house, once in a way, gives the servant girl a snubbing, it has more effect than when the mistress does it. And then, as regards your friend, I consider it very wrong of him not to keep his troubles to himself instead of hanging them about your neck, and thereby disturbing the domestic happiness of other people. But that comes of your considering Frau Bergfeldt more than you do your wife."

"Wilhelmine, do not be so absurd. To-morrow, when you are more reasonable you shall hear what it's all about. In fact you must be told, for I do not care to act further without your consent."

"Do you think that assurance satisfies me? What I am to be told to-morrow had better be said now, for there's no sleep for me now one way or another."

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"Well," said Carl after a little, "you know that the Bergfeldts have had a good many expenses lately and got into debt. . . ."

"And whose fault was it?" I asked. "When a woman is as unpractical as that Frau Bergfeldt . . ."

"It doesn't matter who's to blame. But the worst has still to be told. Bergfeldt has been cajoled into becoming security for some acquaintance of his, and as the man for whom he stands guarantee is about to become bankrupt, Bergfeldt will be called upon to pay."

"I never heard of such a thing!" I exclaimed.

"Well, Wilhelmine, poor Bergfeldt has taken me into his confidence and now it's our turn to act. We must lend him a helping hand unless we wish to see him a completely ruined man."

"We!" I exclaimed horrified. "And how much is he responsible for?"—"Two thousand marks," replied Carl.—"We can never do that," I said, "it would be robbing our own children. We haven't as much as that to spare. Is the little we have laid by to be thrown out of the window like that?"

"I know you do not feel any great affection for the Bergfeldts," said Carl, "but nevertheless I know you will agree to what I want you to do. Haven't we lately come into the money from our aunt at Bützow?"—"She was *my* aunt," I replied.

"It's just because of that, that I want your consent, Wilhelmine. Could you ever be happy again if you knew that your want of generosity had been the ruin of a family? And Bergfeldt will lose his post if he is obliged to declare himself bankrupt."

I did not answer, but thought that Frau Bergfeldt would be all the better for the humiliation. Yet when I thought of Herr Bergfeldt, of Augusta and the son,



it seemed to me as if I should never dare to look them in the face again.

"You are silent, Wilhelmine! Have you no kind answer for me, not even if I beg you with my whole heart?"

"Do what you can't help doing, Carl. I will not be to blame for any misfortune that happens to them."

"I knew you would not say no!" exclaimed Carl joyfully. "You are good and kind at heart, although you may not always choose to show it. And now I will come and give you a kiss."

"Carl," I exclaimed, "stay where you are and don't get your feet cold!" But he paid no heed to what I said. He then told me how it had all happened, how Bergfeldt had got into the difficulty, and what would have to be done to help him. All that was to be done had already been settled, and the arrangements seemed to me wise and practical. Of this I'm certain, there's not such another thoroughly good man in the world as my Carl!

Next morning, however, the circumstances did not appear to me quite in the same light of rosy reconciliation as they had done in the night, and the more I got to know of the details the more serious seemed to me the position which Herr Bergfeldt had got himself into by having become security for a keeper of a tavern. I determined, therefore, to go at once and inspect the place with my own eyes, so as to be sure that our sympathy was not being thrown away on good-for-nothing people.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when I got there; I had intentionally chosen this hour as it is usually a quiet one in such places.

What first struck and pleased me on entering the public room was its neatness. There were neither ends

of cigars nor fish bones lying about, while there were evident signs of a watering-can having recently been passed over the floor, and of its having been swept afterwards. The waiter was just arranging the smaller tables for supper. The room was tolerably large; at the one end there was a kind of recess where the buffet stood, and close to it was a round table larger than the rest. Of course I knew at once that this was the so-called "table for regulars," where fathers wickedly sacrificed the happiness and the very existence of those belonging to them, and where they learned from acquaintances, met there, all those evil ways which hurt the delicate feelings of their wives. I repeat it: that table for the "regulars" is the altar upon which domestic happiness is sacrificed. Many a well-bred girl might be married if this detestable piece of furniture could be forbidden to young men!

Nevertheless I sat down at that very table, and asked the waiter if I could see Frau Helbich—the restaurant is called the Café Helbich—upon business of importance.

It was not long before she appeared, and she gave me the same impression of neatness as the room itself had already done. Her figure was substantial and roundish, rather than long and angular, as I had expected she would be. Her small face looked out pleasantly and kindly from beneath her simple cap, yet I could see traces of tears in her eyes, and she seemed on the point of beginning to cry again.

She asked me of what service she could be to me.

"My good woman," said I, "I have come to talk over very serious matters, namely, of your affairs in connection with the Bergfeldts. You must, of course, be aware that Herr Bergfeldt agreed to become security for your husband?"

“Good heavens,” she exclaimed, “you are no doubt Frau Bergfeldt herself and are come to reproach us!”

“No,” said I indignantly, “I am not Frau Bergfeldt, thank God! My name is Frau Buchholz, but still I know all the particulars of the case.” And then I told her that the Bergfeldts would be completely ruined if other people did not come to their rescue, and that those other people were not very well off, and would therefore have to rob and injure their own children; and that it was altogether a crying shame. “And if, my good woman,” said I in conclusion, “you had paid better attention to your business, and had been somewhat more economical, other people would not have been dragged into the same scrape.”

I wish, however, I had not said so much; for when, in winding up, I gave the little, plump woman one of those looks which my cook even could not have faced—she merely opened her eyes in a most frank way, and quietly and almost imperceptibly shook her head. If she had flown out at me or struck the table I should have felt more comfortable; that silent reproach seemed to bite into my conscience. Could I have done her wrong?

There was a few minutes' silence, during which I felt ill at ease, and so said hesitatingly: “You must pardon my speaking out plainly, but had I not meant to act kindly by you, I should not be here. We mean to do for you what we can, but before deciding we must see our way clearly.”

“It's all the brewer's fault,” she replied.

“How so?” I asked.

“That is not easy to explain,” replied Frau Helbich, “but if you would not mind coming into the kitchen, where I have several things to attend to, I could tell you how it comes that we are standing face to face with ruin. It is truly not our fault, Frau Buchholz.”

I followed her through the taproom into the kitchen. Everything was neat and orderly here too.—“Take your potatoes and peel them in the scullery,” said Frau Helbich to the kitchen-maid, and when you have finished them, pluck the fowls, but be careful not to tear the skins.” We sat down at a large table and Frau Helbich gave me a footstool. Then she began to lard a piece of venison, and I, not wishing to be idle, pulled a basket of Teltow turnips towards me and began to scrape them. Frau Helbich would not, at first, allow me to do this, but I insisted, and we became so friendly over the turnips, it seemed as if we had known each other a long time.

The little woman began her story by saying: “You see, we took this business when our first one could not be kept up. My husband had a small pasteboard manufactory, but when competition came, with large capital and new machinery, it was all over with us. The business had to be closed sooner even than we had thought for, and the little we had saved was only just enough to buy this business. All our acquaintances advised us to take this place, and my husband and I determined to work it bravely. We thought that, with diligence and good method, we could not fail to make it succeed.”

“Where is your husband?” I asked.

“He is asleep just now.”

“Well,” thought I to myself, “that’s a very pretty kind of diligence!”

“The principal thing,” she continued, “was to find a brewer to supply us with beer on credit, and we succeeded in finding one who would give credit, but the man said that *pro formâ* he must have some little security. He added that he would never press us to pay him, even though money might be scarce, and said also

that if he gave us credit, the butcher and baker would speedily come to terms also. Now Herr Bergfeldt is a friend of my husband's and consented to stand guarantee. It was to be a mere form, as we all thought."

"And has come to be serious reality," I interposed. The little woman wiped her eyes, and then continued: "At first all went as well as we could have wished; we were quite satisfied with what we made, and our customers seemed content with what we gave them, and the beer was good. Our rent and taxes were paid regularly—it was only with the brewer that we were behindhand, and this only because several household necessaries had to be purchased, and we had to go to the expense of having the cellars a little altered, as the landlord would not undertake to have it done. It was then that we got our first bad beer.

Our customers grumbled. My husband sent a complaint to the brewer, who merely replied that, as customers paid so they got their beer, and things went on just the same. Of course people began to get out of the habit of coming to us, and expensive food was thus going to waste in the kitchen. Our debts at the butcher's and baker's increased day by day, and there was no possibility any longer of settling their accounts regularly. By promises and some little outlay of money my husband procured different beer from another man, and we hoped that we might yet pull through; but when the other brewer heard that we were getting our beer elsewhere, he demanded to have his account paid forthwith. And if he sets the butcher and baker against us as well, we shall be beggared, and I know he means to do this, for he has spoken of having other people in view to take up our business."

"But," said I, "to judge from the look of your kitchen, you must still have some customers?"

“Yes, people do come in for dinner certainly,” she exclaimed, “but it’s little profit we have out of them. I am all day at the kitchen fire, but what’s the good if people don’t remain to drink a pint or two? Some customers do, it is true, remain far into the night, but they come only to play *skat* and are so taken up with their play they forget to have anything, so that their coming does not even pay for the gas they use. Yesterday it was again about two in the morning before they left, and my poor husband is resting a little just now to make up for having to be up so late at night.”

“Ah, indeed!” I replied, and then added: “My good woman, you may believe me when I assure you that *skat*-playing is a most mischievous accomplishment, and brings endless misery into domestic life.”

“I can fancy it does,” she replied. “There they sit as if their souls’ welfare were at stake, and then they generally wind up by quarrelling. Among them is a Herr Kleines, who always begins it. If the others tell him he played badly, he flings the cards on to the table, uses bad language and swears he’ll never come again. And I think to myself, the end of it all will be that the few people who still come will be leaving us too.”

“And do you find they do?”

“No, they keep on bringing in new acquaintances to take part in the games, till Herr Kleines returns and frightens them off with his angry ways. He never considers what he says.”

“It’s a pity he’s not a son of mine,” said I; “I would have taught him better!”

“No,” said she, “I’m afraid you couldn’t: there’s nothing about him that could be altered; he would need to be taken dry and hard as he is. He must have come into the world with some defect.”

"I don't mean that, my good woman. What I mean is that I would have taken him on the moral side."

"It would do him but little good."

"That remains to be seen," I answered. "And who are the other players?"

"Very respectable folks, although they address each other by nicknames."

"To my mind that's very ill-bred," I remarked.

"It may be, still it sounds droll enough. For instance, they call the house itself *Nifelheim*, which I'm told is another name for Paradise, and then they call each other Little Max, Don Carlos, Poor Gottlieb—but he only looks on—Dear Fritz, Uncle Hans; it's only Dr. Wrenzchen that gets his proper name."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Is Dr. Wrenzchen one of the party? That's a nice piece of news! Well then, the *skat*-players must just lend a helping hand too. My idea is this, my dear. We have a number of acquaintances, and you, of course, have friends too, and the *skat*-players must be included among the number; Dr. Wrenzchen is a gentleman, and will be glad to give his help, and so will the others. All of us together must set your business going for you; every one to pay some fifty or hundred marks, and you will have to give beer-tickets in place of dividends. If your business succeeds, you will then have to begin to repay the moneys gradually."

"If only this were possible!" exclaimed the little woman.

"It is possible," said I, "some one put the idea into my head, and I came to see in what sort of state things were here. I find you a thoroughly good woman, and everything about the place is neat and orderly, therefore it would be a shame were we to let you get into trouble simply on account of that beer tyrant."

The little woman rose up, embraced and kissed me, and cried as if she would never have done. "You are our saving angel!" she sobbed.

"It's only that I'm practical in my ways," said I; "my husband and my brother Fritz will have to come and have a talk with your husband, and settle the business-part of the matter."

"If we could only have good beer, all would go well, I'm sure; I wouldn't spare myself any trouble. But it's hard, with all one's work, to be getting more and more behindhand! How often I have had to close up a cask of beer because it was not fit to drink, and every knock with the hammer in closing it seemed to me as if I were hammering at the coffin which held all our little bit of happiness." In saying this she cried anew, and then smiled and said: "If only it were possible! It would be too much for me, I think."

The turnips were all scraped, and having nothing more to do I got up to go. In the public room the gas had meanwhile been lit, and the waiter was there ready to attend to any one that came in, but it really looked as if customers were avoiding the beer.

I should certainly not care to keep a tavern—one is really too dependent upon brewers and the public.

P. S.—Uncle Fritz has put everything into order. He told me that the affair was much more simple to arrange than he had expected. Only Dr. Wrenzchen objected at first. Herr Kleines had worked very successfully among his set; I mean to invite him to come and see us one of these days, for it seems he is not only very well-informed but also very amusing, and can speak three living languages. Uncle Fritz, it is true, says that he mixes up the languages like a lot of bird-seed, but that doesn't matter to me. If I invite him, it's only that he may be amusing.



And now I may just add how it was that Herr Bergfeldt undertook to be security. His wife, it seems, was for ever grumbling when he went out of an evening to have his glass of beer, and to avoid the constant nagging, he got into the habit of taking a glass of a morning instead. Now everyone knows that this is the worst thing in the world for a man, for how can they do their work of an afternoon with beery brains? That regular glass of a morning is even worse than joining the "regulars" of an evening. A proof of this is that Herr Bergfeldt, in a light-headed mood, after a morning glass, undertook that unlucky piece of business for the Helbichs. But who drove him to that morning glass? She—that woman Bergfeldt, who scarcely deserves to have slipped out of all the responsibility so smoothly.

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#### THE FIRST-BORN.

I AM firmly convinced that if some day Virchow were to measure the brain of that woman Bergfeldt, he would find it too short, for she has again been acting in the most inconceivable manner. What she did was enough to make one fly up a tree for safety; still when you know that a person was born stupid and has never learned anything since, you no longer wonder, but simply shake your head.

One afternoon lately I was sitting knitting when Herr Weigelt unexpectedly appeared on the scenes. Emmi brought in the lamp, and Betti asked him how Augusta was and why she had not come too, and I asked the young man to take a seat as my husband might be in any moment.

Herr Weigelt has always, as far as I know, had something faint-hearted about him, but never have I seen

him look as awkward and bashful as he was that day. He sat down on the corner of a chair, and eyed me in such a guilty kind of way that I could not help exclaiming : “ Good heavens, Herr Weigelt, what has happened to you ; you look like a sick hen that can’t afford to call in an apothecary ! ” He, however, sat there and never uttered a syllable, but kept gazing first at Betti, then at Emmi, and then again at me.

“ But pray, Herr Weigelt,” said I again, “ what is one to think of you ? You haven’t surely got a murder on your conscience ? ” When I said this he collapsed like a badly made jelly, and with some effort got out the words : “ If it were possible, I should like a few words alone with you, Frau Buchholz.”

“ Go away, children,” said I, “ and wait till your father comes in.” They went away, and I was mightily impatient to know what Herr Weigelt wanted. My conjecture was that he might perhaps have had a scene with his wife or with his mother-in-law, perhaps even with both.

When we were alone, and after some dilly-dallying, he began in a doleful way by saying : “ And this is the end of it ! ”—“ To what ? ” I asked.—“ Oh, Frau Buchholz,” he replied, “ my poor wife, my poor Augusta ! ”—“ My goodness, who and what is it ? ”—“ Nothing yet—but, but,” his voice was all of a shake—“ she won’t get over it, it’s impossible for her to get over it ! ” This behaviour in a man greatly displeased me, so I said sternly : “ Now, listen to me, Herr Weigelt, I can feel no respect for you whatever—a man must above all things show himself brave.”—“ And so I have been till a short time ago,” he interposed. “ Lately I have had too much to bear ! ”—“ How so ? ” I asked.—“ Well,” he answered, “ first there was the trouble about the servant-girl. Augusta tried, at first, to get on with a

char-woman, but she was obliged in the end to have proper assistance and so we got a girl at low wages whom my mother-in-law had recommended."

"Well, well," I remarked, laughing, "if she puts her fingers into things, she generally makes a pretty mess."—"The girl is as good as can be," added Herr Weigelt, "but as stupid as a block of wood. Not a day passes, but Augusta is quite upset by her, and yet we are told that she must above all things guard against excitement. I have been told that excitement is worse than poison to her in her present state, and, dear Frau Buchholz, I've been living in deadly terror out of pure anxiety about Augusta."

"No doubt," said I very seriously; "a husband who loves his wife truly, must get uneasy in his mind at times when he reflects that he has no thornless roses to offer her, and that her pathway through this vale of sorrows does sometimes lead her close to the edge of the precipice! Have you been looking about for a trustworthy nurse for her?"

"We have already got one," he replied, "but that is the smallest part of the matter. Our greatest trouble is the work of my mother-in-law." "I am curious to know how!" I exclaimed; "whatever has she been about now?"—"One could hardly believe it," replied Herr Weigelt, "but in education she certainly is somewhat behind the mark." "That, Heaven knows, is true enough!" I remarked.—"But she is given to superstition as well," he continued, "and it occurred to her to go and consult a fortune-teller as to whether Augusta would get through her trouble or not. The cards prophesied that she would not, and the first thing Frau Bergfeldt did was to fly to Augusta to give her this melancholy news before it could cool."—"Is it possible?" I cried; "she surely cannot have her five senses

about her! How did your wife receive this mad piece of news?"—"At first she laughed at it, then, however, she burst into such a violent fit of sobbing, that my heart sank within me. Since that day she goes about her work patiently, but like a sufferer whose days are numbered. She herself thinks now that she will not get over her trouble, and I too think she won't, and our neighbours think the same. And if she doesn't I shall be to blame. Why did I marry such a delicate little creature? Were it not for me she would still live. And she has been looking forward so to next spring when we meant to have paid my parents a visit. And how delighted they would have been! The country air would have done Augusta good. But now that is all at an end, and there's nothing left for me but to stagger after her coffin in despair!" With this he had a regular fit of crying.

"Do be comforted, Herr Weigelt," said I to him soothingly; "who would give heed to what cards said about such matters? Your Augusta is still alive, and with God's help all will yet be well. There are women who look as weak as if a breath of wind would blow them over, and yet have seven or eight children, and are quite hearty. Your Augusta is by no means so very delicate. I've but one fault to find with her—and that's her mother, that Frau Bergfeldt."

"You are probably right there, dear Frau Buchholz," replied Herr Weigelt drying his tears, "it was frightfully imprudent of her to torment Augusta with such melancholy forebodings. And now that I come to think of it, Augusta is really not so delicate. She has, in fact, fair physical strength. Six months ago she could lift up the small cane-bottomed chair with outstretched arm. Dear Frau Buchholz, I know you to be kind, and I'm sure that for Augusta's sake you will

come over to us and see that things are done rightly when the time comes? It is this I wanted to ask you to do for us, and this is why I came to you."

"But still you can't leave her own mother out of consideration," I remarked.

"If you wish my Augusta to be murdered, then say so—but I know that you will not and cannot do that. You have always thought so well of her!"

"Well, well," said I in reply, "we had better go at once, so that I can have a talk with Augusta and see what she requires."

At that moment there was a violent ring at the door bell. "That is Carl!" said I, but I was mistaken, for Betti came running in and said that a porter had called with a message, asking Herr Weigelt to return home as quickly as possible.

When the poor fellow heard this, every vestige of colour left his face. His eyes looked glassy and his lips trembled. "Be a man," said I to him, "and keep up your spirits. Fetch a cab at once. I shall be ready and waiting in a couple of minutes."

He fetched a cab and we drove off; but that drive I shall never in my life forget. First he exclaimed: "I am a murderer!" Then he moaned like a criminal about to be executed. Then he called out: "We shall only be in time to see her a lifeless corpse!" At last I could stand it no longer, and said: "If you don't put an end to your ravings I shall stop the cab and leave you. Can't you wait and see how things are before you begin your lamentations? It would be more sensible at all events."—After this he gave himself up to simple sobbing.

When we got up to their abode, he was going to rush into the bedroom without more ado. "Stop!" I cried, and held him tight by the collar of his coat. "Such

things are for womanfolk to attend to ; you men have nothing to do with them. You would only frighten Augusta by your vehemence. I will go in first and come and let you know how things are." And with these words I opened the bedroom door gently and went in.

What he did meanwhile I don't know ; it's to be hoped he employed his time well by thinking seriously about himself. When I got back to him I had good news for him.—"Come with me, now," I whispered, "Augusta wants to see you." He went in, but made a halt at the door and did not seem to have courage to go farther. For, there before him in the lap of a strange woman, who was sitting on a low chair before a small bath, lay a little living creature, a human babe, whom the woman was wrapping up in soft linen and swaddling clothes. But Augusta stretched out her hand to him and said in a low voice : "Franz." He sank on his knees beside her bed and covered her hand with kisses, and then kissed her on the mouth, saying : "My sweet, my dear little wife !"

The new-born babe now began to cry and Herr Weigelt regularly pricked up his ears, and gave a good long look at the little wrinkled, red-brownish creature whose small face seemed more like one of last year's apples than the countenance of a human being in the first stage of its existence. My children at that age were much prettier, and the youngest, especially, was like an angel.

"Come sir," said the strange woman, "give a look at the boy—it's your first!"—"A boy," he stammered—"my boy?" The woman laughed. "Wud ye like to tak him up?" she asked. "If only I don't break it," he said, taking hold of the infant most awkwardly. "Na, na, you'd better leave it," said the woman ;

“you’ll have to learn to play the father better than that—you don’t know how yet! But now the child and mother must have a sleep. I’m thinking that door out there had better be closed?”

He seemed glad to obey these directions, and we then attended to the mother and baby. When they were both settled to rest, our next business was to attend to the father, for it was somewhat past supper-time already. In the kitchen I found the servant-girl, and told her to go out and fetch a bottle of rum, but added not to ask for a bottle as a pint would be cheaper. I gave her money for it and off the girl trotted.

I thought that if Herr Weigelt had a little cordial it would do him good, after all the anxiety he had been in. My Carl always has his glass of grog when anything out of the way happens. For the midwife and nurse I made coffee—it’s what they like best; buttered rolls too were not wanting, so no one came off with too little.

We sat down to supper, I, the midwife and Herr Weigelt. The servant-girl had fetched the rum in a milk jug because, she said, I had specially asked her not to get a bottle. A terribly stupid creature, to be sure.

Herr Weigelt found it excellent, and was very pleased when we two experienced women assured him that Augusta had got over it splendidly and that he might now quite well have the birth announced in the newspapers with the word “safely.” He was greatly delighted that it was a boy, and said: “He will have to be called Franz after me, that’s to say if Augusta would like it too.”

Hereupon I said: “Herr Weigelt, I do not know whether your grog is to your taste, but there is sugar on the table, and the girl can bring you more hot water,

and you can add what you like. As to the baby's name, you can talk that matter over with your wife to-morrow—she is scarcely equal to that yet.”

Augusta had given me the key of her linen press, so that I might give out what was necessary, and I found other things to attend to ; thus Herr Weigelt was left to himself. I do wish now that I had looked after him, for that senseless girl—as I found out afterwards—in place of taking him a jug of hot water as I had told her, had placed the jug of rum beside him, and he, not thinking what he was about, had added rum to his glass instead of water.

I was in the kitchen, talking to the midwife, when I suddenly heard singing. On hurrying to the sitting-room I soon found what was up. The excitement, the rum, and the inborn helplessness of the man had done their worst. Herr Weigelt was fuddled.

“I shall go to Augusta,” he said, as I entered ; “she is an angel!” and then sang out : “She alone it is I love ; yes, she alone !”

“Do you wish to kill your wife and the infant with all this uproar ?” said I hastily to him. “You are a perfect cannibal !”

“Oh, Wilhelmine, I am so fond of you !” said he. “Come, dear old soul, and give me a kiss !”

I avoided him with all the dignity I could muster, saying : “Are you not ashamed of yourself, Herr Weigelt, you just become a father, and now behaving like this ? Shame upon you—before Augusta, before the nurse, before the new servant-girl, and above all before your own infant !”

“It hasn't got any eyes yet,” replied he.

I let him know the impropriety of this remark of his, and said I hoped he didn't class his child among field-mice and puppies, which, as far as I knew, *were* born



blind. Enough, I was very angry with him, and told him the best thing he could do was to go to bed, and implored him in the name of the heads of his family to keep quiet. At last he became reasonable. I hurried to Augusta, who had awakened and was asking what all the noise was about.

I told her that her husband was quite beside himself for joy that everything had gone so well, but that I had now persuaded him to go to bed without disturbing her. To think of my having had to expose myself to all sorts of unpleasantnesses, and even to tell falsehoods, simply because that senseless girl Trina had set a jug of rum before him!

After a while I thought to myself: "He'll now very likely be in bed," and considered it my duty to see whether he had put out his candle properly. But not a bit of it—my young man was very far from being asleep or in bed either. There he sat on his make-up bed, and had an open book in his hands which he had taken out of the bookshelf. "Herr Weigelt, are you not going to get to bed?"—"Oh, Frau Buchholz," he groaned, "the poor child, the poor child!"

"And what's the matter next?" I asked.

"I knocked up against that bookshelf in coming in," said he, "and this book fell into my hands. Oh, the poor child! He will have to attend the Academy. I learned out of this grammar myself—it's Greek—and he will have to learn Greek. He will never get to understand those verbs in 'mi'—I myself never could. And they will flog him, and he's so small and can't stand being touched. I'll kill the schoolmaster that lays a hand on the child! It's my boy—nobody's but mine! Do you know the verbs in 'mi'?"

"Herr Weigelt," I replied with dignity, "I do not know what insult this question of yours may contain,

and so will waste no words with you about it. But I ask you to make haste and get to bed. Take off your boots first. Now then, let me help you take off your coat and your waistcoat. I'm a married woman, and don't mind so far. You'll manage the rest, I should think ; more I cannot do—it would go against my feelings of delicacy." With this I left him alone.

After a quarter of an hour I looked in upon him again. And of course, just as I thought, he had left the light burning and was snoring away like a saw-mill. When my Carl snores I put a round, narrow sofa pillow under his head—that does some good ; but, as I couldn't see anything of the kind here, I pushed the stupid old grammar under Augusta's husband's head. Then I took away the light and thought to myself : "What a very different kind of man my Carl is, after all !"

Augusta was asleep when I crept on tip-toe into the bedroom once more, to see that all was right. When I went up to the cradle and was about to bend over the little one, she opened her eyes ; so even in her sleep she must have been conscious that some one was approaching her babe. She looked up at me, and, notwithstanding the dim light, I noticed the supreme happiness that sparkled from her eyes, and the unutterable joy that was shed over her face. She really looked pretty at that moment, but otherwise she cannot exactly complain of being beautiful. I nodded to her in a kindly way, and then went off home.

## "TO A SPOONFUL OF SOUP." \*

It is with fate precisely as with the weather. One keeps on hoping that it may at last be turning fine ; one consults the barometer, one watches the evening clouds ; one says it *must* change ; one reads the reports of the weather chart, and says to one's children : " My dears, to-morrow the weather will be fine ; put your things to-rights, we shall be going out." But the next day comes, and it is pouring still as if the pipes of heaven had burst. Now it's the same with mankind and their fate : they may act as they will, may hope and wish, may worry and scurry, and even, as the poets say, put the world's clock on a bit—it may all be to no purpose. They have finally and at last to acknowledge their helplessness, and must submit, broken-hearted, to the force of the eternal, primeval laws.

However, I for my own part, being rather resolute, do once in a way battle against these eternal laws. Rome wasn't ruined in a day, not a bit of it—there's a whole lot been written on that subject.

I considered myself bound to let the doctor see that we did not value him merely as a family physician, but that we also regarded him as a friend of the family. Hence I invited him, in a friendly way, to take a spoonful of soup with us on Sunday next. Of course this did not mean that he was merely expected to soup, so I added that we had received a present from Mecklenburg of a leg of veal twenty pounds in weight, which could be properly enjoyed only by connoisseurs.

\* *Die Suppe bei uns einzunehmen* (to take soup with us) is a friendly form of invitation to dinner, common in Germany.

“Wilhelmine, what piece of deception is this of yours, about a leg of veal?” exclaimed Carl, when I handed him my note of invitation for approval.

“Oh, never mind that, it will be there when the time comes,” I replied; “and nobody need weigh it on the dinner table.”

Carl shook his head disapprovingly, but I gave him to understand that there were things which men had better leave women to manage. The doctor had to be invited, that was certain; we owed it to him and to ourselves.

The doctor accepted. He wrote to say that by five in the afternoon he would have got through all his business, and would be delighted to come. From this note it was clear how conscientious he is about his practice; there are doctors who do not do any kind of work of a Sunday, whether they are called in specially, or whether accidental work comes in their way. A medical man like Dr. Wrenzchen, with such sterling ideas, could not fail to be welcomed in any family.

Carl asked me whether Uncle Fritz had not better be invited too, but this suggestion was met with only a knowing smile from me. I had no idea of having a party, I wanted him alone—the doctor—all to ourselves. This time he should not escape me! I arranged in good time about the roast, and Sunday came when the week had done its work.

At three o'clock I pushed the roast into the oven with my own hands. Emmi happened to be in the kitchen, and asked me whether she might run across to the Bergfeldts and ask them to come in to dinner. Fancy the girl's innocence! she had no notion whatever of the day's importance. I embraced her, tears filled my eyes, and my voice was choky. I could only point to the oven without uttering a word—did not

my child's whole future depend upon what was stewing there?

Thereupon Emmi remarked: "I don't wonder at your being unhappy about the veal, mamma, it will never be done in time; we have never had such a large piece in the house. And none of us like it."—"There's somebody that does though!" I exclaimed knowingly. "But run away, dear, and dress yourself prettily. Put on your puffed velvet bodice; and the flowers I brought from the market for you, put in your hair. They are orange-blossoms."—"They are not effective," replied Emmi. "They are symbolical, my dear. In Italy a bride's wreath is always made of them. But come, run away, child." Emmi coloured up to her ears, looked at me in surprise, and then went away. I turned to the roast, which was already beginning to brown, and said to the cook: "Jette, in ten minutes it'll have to be basted for the first time. I am most anxious for it to be good." "So am I, mum; you may go and dress with an easy mind—I'll take good care of it."

The table was laid and everything ready. Carl looked so neat and tidy that I gave him a kiss, and our girls looked angelic, especially Emmi in her steel-blue velvet. "Just like a pretty little doctor's wife!" I whispered to Carl. The nearer the hands of the clock moved towards five, the more anxious I became; for what if the doctor were yet to send a message that he was prevented from coming? What if some patient had sent for him? Then, too, I was afraid lest the roast might get burnt, or that the exquisite cream sauce might get spoilt. These thoughts made me fly to the kitchen. But I found Jette basting the roast with the most loving care: it was looking perfection. We put the sauce through a strainer, added a small

teaspoonful of arrowroot to thicken it, and put in a bit of fresh butter to make it mellow and tasty. "The doctor will lick all his ten fingers," thought I, grinning to myself; and Jette grinned too, as if her thoughts had been much the same as mine.

Punctually at five the doctor came. A perfect weight fell from my heart. "You must take us just as we are, dear doctor," said I; some friends were coming, but unfortunately—"Here, however, Carl interrupted me—he so hates those convenient white lies—and said: "The smaller the circle the more sociable we can be." And the doctor added, laughing: "If only one's heart be black."\* So amidst merriment and laughter we went in to dinner. I took in the doctor, opposite to him was Emmi's place, Carl was on his left on account of having to serve the soup, and Betti was on my other side.

We began with simple homely soup served with Marx and port-wine, which the doctor pronounced excellent. Then we had bass with oyster-sauce (of course only tinned American oysters), and then came the roast veal. Napoleon must have greeted the pyramids with the same kind of smile as the doctor did that leg of veal. At a wink from me Emmi and Betti smiled too, although both were on the point of making wry faces. I knew I had got at the doctor's weak side; and even though—as Fritz says—he gulps down anything that is wet and praises it to—still, Carl had certainly provided capital wines: a bottle of Johannisberg at one mark the bottle to the fish, and a Château la Pancha at one mark thirty. The doctor declared a

\* This remark refers to an anecdote of a peasant who appeared at a funeral in his usual red waistcoat in place of mourning clothes, and upon being asked how this happened, the man replied that he did not think it mattered, "if only his heart were black."

nail might be hammered into him if he ever wished to have better wine. We were uncommonly merry ; I was especially pleased that the doctor talked to Emmi and told her anecdotes he had read in the papers. We knew all the stories, of course, for we take in the same paper, but still I could pay him a compliment by saying that he had a wonderful memory.

When we had finished dinner we had coffee in the adjoining room, and the gentlemen lit their cigars. Carl then asked the doctor kindly to excuse his absenting himself for half an hour or so, for he had important business to attend to. This was true enough, for he had to go over the accounts of his district. Betti went off to the Bergfeldts' without taking leave, and Jette I sent with a piece of the fish to the Weigelts' in the Acker Strasse. I knew she could not be back much under an hour. When they were all safely off, I begged the doctor to excuse me for a few minutes, as I wanted just to run across to a neighbour for a minute.

The truth however is that I never left the house at all, but, after slamming the house door, I crept back on tip-toe, and hid myself in the store-room. There I sat down on a kitchen chair.

“He has taken his food and drink well,” thought I ; “if he has a spark of gratitude for what he has enjoyed, he will offer her now his heart and hand. But” —such were my doubts—“are there not some people who think nothing of an invitation, who even consider it a sacrifice on their part to have to meet other people they don't care about?” In front of me on the table stood a dish with white beans. I took up a handful, thinking : “If I find them in pairs, the two will to-day come to some understanding with each other.” I sorted the beans on the table. There were twenty-seven. Not in pairs, therefore. “The first time doesn't count,

however," thought I. Now for the second; there were fourteen!

All good things are three, says the proverb. Quite lost in the sorting of the beans, I heard and saw nothing of the world beyond, when suddenly two strong arms were thrown round me, and some one gave me such a smacking kiss that my ears seemed to roar. I jumped up. In the twilight I saw that some military creature—a regular seven-footer—was standing before me. "Who are you, and what do you want here?" I asked in a commanding voice. He drew himself up into position and blustered out: "Corporal Gehren of the Guards."—"And what is it you want here?" I exclaimed. "Jette asked me to come in this evening for some roast veal."—"That girl Jette?" I cried, enraged. "She is absolutely forbidden to have any lover in the kitchen!"—"I'm not her lover; she's only my sister!" replied the young Goliath. "Your sister," said I in wrath, "that's an untruth. The way you caught me in your arms is not the way a sister is embraced; it's more than my Carl would venture to do. Be off with you!" He wouldn't go, however, and kept ogling the roast veal which he had discovered on the table, and which I thought of having sliced later with the punch-bowl—that is to say, if things could be brought far enough for us to celebrate the betrothal. "Be off!" I exclaimed again; "be off, or I'll call for help!"

Overcome by the insult, my wrath and vexation, I cried out: "Murder, burglars, thieves, help!"—The soldier no sooner perceived that I was in earnest than he speedily disappeared down the back staircase. The doctor and Emmi came hurrying in. What was I to do?—The truth could not be told. I muttered something about a fright and ghosts, and pretended to feel faint. Emmi was quite distracted at seeing me in this



unusual plight, but thought I to myself : “Wilhelmine, act cunningly, for no doctor with a sense of duty and a conscience could be so wicked as to forsake a suffering creature, when only a short time before he enjoyed an abundance of roast veal and was extremely well pleased with the wine he got.” So I recovered but slowly, and told them I must have got frightened by the kitchen towel in the dark.—How could I confess that in place of going out I had sat down in the store-room to act the spy? And could I have said a syllable about the outrageous attack of the soldier, who had taken me for Jette?—No, never!

The doctor was charming to me ; it is verily a pleasure to be a patient of his. He said that a fright such as I had had was only external, and would soon go off. He regretted not to be able to stay longer, but said he was obliged to look in upon a patient who had a fixed idea every Sunday evening that he was catching a salmon. Before sending him to Dalldorf he wanted to see if the man’s fancies could not be got rid of by some of the rules of medical art. As he would not be persuaded to remain I had, with a heavy heart, to let him go.

When he was gone, I said to Emmi : “Well, and how did you get on together?”—“Oh, very well.”—“And what did you talk about?”—“He said at first that he fancied he smelt orange-blossoms in the room, and also said he couldn’t bear the smell, for when he was a child he once had medicine given to him in orange-blossom water, and since then he detested the smell.”—“What did you say to that?”—“I told him that I would take the blossoms out of my hair, but he said he could hardly expect me to do that. However, I did, and he came and sat beside me.”—“Well, and then?”—“He told me all sorts of things about his dear father and dear mother, who, he said,

was always telling him that she would like nothing better than for him to bring her a daughter-in-law."—"And he said no more?" I asked breathlessly.—"Well, just as he was saying that we heard your screams, mamma, and hurried to see what was the matter."

Everything turned black before me, and I sank down on the sofa as if crushed. So near the goal—the wished-for words had been on his lips when fate, in the shape of a hungry warrior, cruelly stepped in between! My first thought was to have Jette packed off to the police-station as soon as she came back, for it was clear she had left the back door open for any armed creature to enter the house. But I did not dare to do this. What would my Carl, my children, Dr. Wrenzchen, and even Fritz have said to my having of my own accord banished myself in the store-room? It would all have come out! Horrible!

And Jette has since that evening been so impudent and saucy that I have scarcely dared to say a word to her; and, besides, I don't go near the kitchen of an evening now, for fear of coming across the soldier. Thus, in place of the anticipated happiness, I have reaped nothing but vexation and annoyance, and who knows when I may have the chance of getting the doctor here again? I feel very much down-hearted and humbled, but, nevertheless, I don't mean to give up the struggle against fate to get the doctor.

P.S. The doctor did *not* go to see a patient that evening. He was at the Café Helbich playing *skat* with his chums. Uncle Fritz met him there, and told me that "catching salmon" meant playing *skat* for beer. So he has deceived me, in spite of the roast veal and the bass with oyster-sauce. I should just like to see him dare do this as my son-in-law; I would soon get him out of the habit of "catching salmon"!

## THE CHRISTENING.

THE Weigelts' baby's name had of course been entered at the registry office, but it was getting high time for it to be properly baptised, and not, any longer, to face each new day a young heathen child. The delay had had its good reasons, for Herr Weigelt's father is a country clergyman somewhere on the Pomeranian coast, and of course the Weigelts wished the grandfather to baptise the grandson ; but old Herr Weigelt had found it difficult to get a few days' leave. He had written now, however, to say that he could come, and had mentioned the day of his arrival in Berlin.

Young Weigelt explained this all to me the day he came to ask Emmi to stand godmother to his boy. Of course I gave my consent to this, for Emmi and Augusta have always been very good friends, and moreover anything more charming than a young and pretty godmother cannot be imagined. It ranks next to a bridesmaid, although in my eyes to be a bride stands considerably higher still.

When young Weigelt told me that his father was coming I naturally asked where he was going to stay, as I knew their accommodation was limited, and a christening gives rise to all kinds of additional trouble in a house. "Oh, Frau Buchholz, you have always been so kind to us, and I know have a spare room! If you would allow my dear old father to live with you, I should be more grateful to you than I can say. My mother-in-law has unfortunately no room to offer him either." I considered a minute or two, and then said : "We shall be pleased to receive your father into our house. Indeed, he shall be exceedingly welcome, but

I must ask you for a favour in return."—"I will gladly do anything I can."—"Well, what I want you to do is to ask Dr. Wrenzchen to stand godfather. You know him; now will you do this?"—"I will do all in my power," replied Herr Weigelt, "even though we have to drag him on with a pair of pincers." We both laughed at this cruel idea, which only a short time before had been the device of a murderer for killing his customers. After this Herr Weigelt took his departure, happy in the extreme.

When he had gone, I thought to myself: "Wilhelmine, this idea of yours is worth its weight in gold. The doctor can't escape you. And that Emmi shall look a young fairy you are pretty sure to manage."

The following day Herr Weigelt came again. "He has consented!" he called out to me as soon as he entered the front door.—"Without much shuffling?" I asked.—"On the contrary, as soon as he heard that Fräulein Emmi was to stand godmother, he accepted forthwith, and looked as pleased as if he had had his hand full of trumps!"—"That is capital," thought I; "he seems himself to have made up his mind that his time is come!" We then discussed all sorts of practical matters about the christening festival. I promised to lend him our punch-bowl and glasses, and whatever else they might require, for the Bergfeldts' bowl had of course got a knock when they were moving into their new house, and it cannot again appear on the table without blushing. In my joy I would have lent him everything out of our best room, had that been possible.

After this we began to arrange our spare room for old Herr Weigelt's visit. The girls maintained that it would be desperately tiresome to have a parson in the house, as, of course, no one would venture to utter a merry word, and we should all have to look solemn.

I said to them, however, with a knowing look : " Children, after rain comes sunshine ; after the bitter food you shall have pure honeycomb. But I want you to get out your hymn-books and put them on the work-table—that will make a good impression. You, Emmi, shall have a white dress with pale blue trimmings. Light blue is your colour. The dress will come in for your dancing-parties next winter ; and, mark me, it won't be thrown away." This was on Friday.

Hence we had time enough for getting the dress ready, for Herr Weigelt was not to arrive till the following Tuesday afternoon, and the christening was to be on the Wednesday.

When the old gentleman arrived, of course he first paid his children a visit and then came on to us, accompanied by his son. At first I felt a little nervous, not being accustomed to have much to do with clergymen ; however, old Herr Weigelt had such hearty and winning ways that in ten minutes we felt as comfortable as if we had known each other for years. When we went in to supper he gallantly offered me his arm, and upon taking his first glass of wine he said that he must be allowed to drink to the health of the family of whom he had heard so much good from his son and daughter-in-law. In his children's names, therefore, he begged to thank them for their many acts of kindness. In answer to this my Carl said that so much praise he was sure would quite embarrass me, whereupon old Herr Weigelt held out his hand to me, gave mine a hearty shake, and said he knew quite well what he was about, and that he had not said one word too much.

After supper I addressed myself to Herr Weigelt junior, and implored him, for Heaven's sake, to look up Dr. Wrenzchen again and to remind him of his con-

sent, and of his duty as a Christian. So he went off somewhat early. Old Herr Weigelt chatted with my daughters. On noticing the piano, he asked them if they played or sang. Before we knew what we were about, he had sat down at the piano, and told us that long ago, as a student, he had once seen the 'Freischütz,' and that in those days every one was enthusiastic about the opera. And he sang us quite merrily the aria: *Durch die Wälder, durch die Auen.*" Emmi afterwards sang a few songs also, but to his regret she did not know *Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen.* "When I was young," he said, "the song used to be sung everywhere; to me it is like a reminiscence of the far-off days of my youth." And he played the air and sang it too, and we all listened and were surprised that the withered lips could still give forth such joyful notes. I had imagined clergymen very different—serious, and with never a joke; but when I saw how genial and kindly this Herr Weigelt was, an idea flashed through my mind, and one which I fancied could not fail to succeed.

First, I allowed my daughters to retire, and then said to him confidentially: "Dear sir, to-morrow you will have to do with a godfather who is a most pleasant man, and one whom I could welcome as a son-in-law, but the wickednesses of Berlin life have ensnared him. Do, I beg you, address yourself a little to his conscience, and set forth to him the joys of married life in pretty bright colours. If he stands godfather he cannot but listen to what you say." The parson considered for a few minutes and then said: "I will do my best to lead him on to the right road."—"You will be doing a good work," I replied, "for you have no idea how corrupt the young men in Berlin are. My own brother Fritz would be none the worse for a word of warning!"

Next day was the christening. The Weigelts had arranged it all very nicely, and everything looked so cheerful and neat in their rooms that I was really astonished to find that a few flowerpots and happy faces could make a house appear quite festive, small though it be. Among those present were all the Bergfeldts, of course, from A to Z, Herr and Frau Krause with their boy Eduard, Uncle Fritz, their landlord, a Herr Meyer, with his wife and daughter, a couple of friends of young Weigelt's, among them a Herr Theophile, who was studying chemistry, and who played all kinds of tricks later in the day. Then there were ourselves and Dr. Wrenzchen, so that the room was as full as an omnibus on a rainy day. For the convenience of Dr. Wrenzchen the christening was fixed for six o'clock, and with the stroke of six he entered. Herr Bergfeldt held his grandson, and Dr. Wrenzchen and Emmi stood right and left of him.

The old clergyman began his address. He said that the gently slumbering infant (it *was* sleeping famously) might be likened to a young bud which was to develop in the great garden of humanity, and that the god-parents were expected to undertake the gardener's duty in order that the blossom might give pleasure to the owner of the garden. This he explained by a number of similes, and so touched our hearts that we were all aroused to feel sincere wishes for the welfare of our young fellow-mortal. He then turned to the god-parents and said that the duty they had undertaken to perform, meant, in reality, that their *protégé* demanded something of them. He knew, he said, that Berlin—like Babylon of old—was full of temptations which specially threatened to destroy all those who went their own way without considering others. There, was to be found lurking the gambling table, drink, and sin, all

dragging young persons into the abyss. One thing only could save them, and that was a home of their own, the care of others in grief, in need, and in trouble. The trials which married life brought with it would lead those hurrying to their destruction back to the right path, and to contrition. Therefore let every young man take upon himself the yoke of marriage, in order that he may escape the snares of evil company, and renounce the follies of life.

I was beginning to feel as if cold water were running down my back, for the good man was going further than I had calculated upon, but now that he had started there was no means of holding him back. Dr. Wrenzchen was listening pretty attentively, but did not seem very much edified. "What a happiness it is," continued old Herr Weigelt, "when a young man opens a house in which a good spirit presides, where the daughters do not throw aside the hymn-books out of which their mother has taught them; where a mother rules, and extends a protecting hand even to the lost youth whom she calls her son."—At this Dr. Wrenzchen screwed up his mouth a little, and I thought, "That doesn't promise much good; if only the good parson would stop—he is making the doctor quite frantic!"—"There are, my brethren," said Herr Weigelt in conclusion, "two paths—the one of virtue and order, of self-denial and peace; and the other is the path of sin, with its false pleasures, that end in despair and pangs of conscience. Who would be long in the choosing? Surely only those that are hardened of heart, those who have given themselves up wholly to evil ways, those only who are damned. What is it, then, that this infant about to be christened demands of you? It asks of its godparents to precede him on the path of virtue."



Then the formal christening took place, and the infant Franz was carried back to the bedroom.

I was curious to see what effect the address would have upon the doctor. The good parson had meant too well; I do not in any way consider the doctor as completely lost as he had represented; but when parsons begin to talk about sin they generally paint it pretty black.

The table was speedily laid, and we took our seats. Dr. Wrenzchen handed Emmi to her place, and I must say the girl looked lovely. The clergyman's place was on the sofa beside Frau Bergfeldt, and the Krauses took their boy between them. I had been astonished that Eduard had kept quiet during the christening, but it came out afterwards why; the boy had discovered a dish of sweets, and had eaten a tolerable quantity. Augusta had quickly to send round to the confectioner's to have the damage repaired. As I was still somewhat on bad terms with Frau Krause I said nothing, but gave her a look which she could not fail to understand.

Augusta had prepared quite a nice little dinner; we all enjoyed it, and when we had warmed up a little the drinking of healths began. Herr Krause proposed the health of the parents, my Carl that of old Herr Weigelt—and very well he did it—and old Herr Weigelt that of the godparents. Uncle Fritz asked us to drink to the health of the four Franz's: the infant, the father, the grandfather, and Dr. Wrenzchen—whose Christian name was likewise Franz—and added that if things went on at this rate there would one day be an Imperial Franz-regiment in the family. This made us all laugh most heartily, and Dr. Wrenzchen coloured up rather—the doctor talked to Emmi, to be sure, but it seemed to me in rather a reserved and cool kind of way. This made me a little uneasy.

With the dessert came the punch-bowl, and Herr Theophile showed us several very amusing tricks. He ate fire without burning himself, and swallowed knives and forks. "These are miracles as great as those that occurred in the days of Moses and Aaron," said the clergyman.

"Do you mean Aaron the lottery-agent?" asked Frau Bergfeldt; "he is a very respectable man, and I don't believe that he eats fire." No one took any notice of this boundless piece of stupidity.

The boy Krause had left his seat and gone across to Herr Theophile in order to watch the tricks, and all at once the child cried out: "Ha, ha! he hasn't swallowed the knife at all, it's lying in his lap; ha, ha!"

Herr Krause told Eduard to be quiet. Some of the gentlemen rose and lighted their cigars, and I took a seat by the doctor. "Well, dear doctor," said I, "and how did you like the christening address?"

"It has given me a good deal to think about," he answered; "but the fact is, dear Frau Buchholz, I like my personal freedom, without actually following sinful ways. I should think well over the matter before I put myself under the guardianship of even the most excellent of mothers-in-law. Heaven only knows who put the old gentleman up to his speech, but I must say he has not succeeded in making me wish to take upon myself the yoke of cares! Nor can I imagine that you would welcome a villainous son-in-law."

There now, I knew it! That was an evident refusal, and moreover one the size of a clothes-basket.\* Why had not the old gentleman understood the doctor better? He might surely have known that delicate affairs required delicate handling.

\* *Einen Korb geben* (to give a basket) is the common expression in Germany for a refusal of an offer of marriage.

I should have continued the subject a little, for persuasion is sometimes of use, but all of a sudden Frau Krause cried out: "Where is Eduard?"—Yes, it might well be asked, where was he? Not in the room, at all events, for his chair was empty. Nor was he in the adjoining room, nor in the kitchen. "Good gracious, where is Eduard?"—Herr Krause looked about everywhere, but the child was not to be found. In the adjoining room a window had been opened to let out the tobacco-smoke and the heat. Could he have fallen out? Herr Krause looked out. Below on the pavement lay something dark.—"My child," shrieked Frau Krause; "he will be dead from the fall!" With this she went off into a faint. Herr Krause and some of the gentlemen hurried down the stairs; those who remained helped us in trying to restore the mother to consciousness. It was a mercy we had a doctor at hand, for the clergyman had seized a bottle of oil in place of vinegar, and was about to rub her temples with it. Frau Krause had never stirred while her husband was out of the room. He now returned and exclaimed: "It was only the window-cushion, not our boy; rouse up, Adelheid, and consider where you are." She did come back to herself then, and sobbed: "Where is Eduard? I know you want to conceal the horrible truth from me. But tell me the truth—this uncertainty will kill me!"

We none of us knew what to say, when suddenly that Frau Bergfeldt, who had been lolling on the sofa, jumped up screaming: "Somebody's pricked me!" And true enough it was—that young rascal Krause had crept under the sofa, and finding an upholsterer's needle which had been left there, ran it into Frau Bergfeldt's leg.

She was in a fearful state of mind, and wanted then

and there to examine the place to see if she was much hurt. It was with difficulty that I kept her from doing this. We went to the bedroom, and scarcely a drop of blood was to be seen, only a small red speck on her stocking. I was, moreover, surprised to find what huge feet she had.

The Krauses were perfectly idiotic in their delight at having their child safe. The mother kissed and hugged the boy in a way that made me sick to look at her.

"I would advise you to take him to the servant's room," said I; "it looks on to the courtyard, and nobody would hear you if you warmed his jacket for him!"

"What do you say?" exclaimed the mother in a fury—"beat that sweet angel? You are not one of the priestesses of humanity, truly!"

"Heaven preserve me from such humanity!" I replied. "Let me tell you that if you go on spoiling that boy, then verily the new prison built in Moabite will have been built for him as well."—"Frau Buchholz, spare a mother's feelings," cried Herr Krause.—"Well, that boy ought to be well anointed with the balm of birch," said I.—"Judge not, that ye be not judged!" preached Herr Krause. "Come, Adelheid, there is no occasion for us to put up with such remarks as these!"

The Krauses went away, and as Frau Krause was frightfully excited, the husband begged the doctor to accompany them. And the doctor went! He actually could go!

We remained a little while longer, but good-humour seemed to have forsaken the party. The punch-bowl was not half emptied when we left. How well we might have celebrated a betrothal with what remained!

Emmi was very downcast. I believe she is seriously in love with the doctor.

The poor child ! It really does seem as if misfortune always pursued her.

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#### A WHIT-SUNDAY JAUNT.

I HAD never been anywhere by the City Railway, nor had the children, so I said to Carl that nothing surely would be more delightful than to make use of the first day in Whit-suntide for a trip, and to go part of the way by the City line. I said that this would be cheaper than anything else, and that moreover it would be instructive as well as interesting. We should also avoid the crowds of common people who generally make more use of the Whit-Monday.

Carl raised no objections to the proposal. I sent Betti to the Bergfeldts to see if they would go with us, but Betti returned with only a half sort of answer, and looked so queer about the eyes that I felt a smell of burning, although I did not yet know of what. It came out afterwards what it was.

"Why did the Bergfeldts not decide definitely?" I asked.—"They considered the City line too commonplace!"—"Even if *we* went with them!" I replied sharply, and asked further: "Is your Emil coming with us then?"—She was silent.—"Or are you going with the Bergfeldts?"—Again silence.

"A lover surely doesn't leave his sweetheart on such a day!" I added.—"I didn't see Emil," she replied.—"Then ask him to-morrow morning."—"Perhaps," she answered.—"What do you mean by perhaps!" I exclaimed.—"Have you quarrelled? Have you fallen out with each other?"—"No," said Betti in a low voice.

—“Well, what then? What’s the matter? Let me hear what you have got to say.”—“Nothing,” she whispered, and then burst out crying, and looked as if she were about to faint.

I did everything that is usually done in such a case: I fetched Eau de Cologne, I unfastened her dress, which was a little tight, and petted her till she came back to herself. “Now, come, dear, tell me what has happened,” I asked. “You can surely confide everything to your mother?”—“No,” she cried, “no, no, do not ask me, it is dreadful.”

There arose in my mind all sorts of horrible ideas, but I put on a smile, although I felt my heart ready to break.

“The best thing will be for you to get married soon,” I said at last. “Shall we have the wedding in the autumn?”

The look the child gave me I shall never in my life forget. Betti has such pretty brown eyes, like a gazelle’s, but she looked at me as if hurt to death, so piteously, so sorrowfully, it cut me to the heart. “Never,” she said, “never.”—“Well now,” I exclaimed, “but he *shall* marry you as sure as my name’s *Wilhelmine!*”—“But I won’t have him,” answered Betti.—“This is a pretty story,” said I; “and pray why won’t you have him?”—“Because I hate him, I despise him! Oh, oh, he . . . !” Upon this she had a succession of attacks of fainting, and I had to put her to bed. What had taken place I could not discover, but Betti is somewhat obstinate by nature, and what she won’t tell, she won’t. She answered never a word to all my questions, and I was left as wise as before.

To Carl I did not say anything about this new trouble. I thought, when once I know myself what it really is, he shall be told. All the more eagerly did I make the

necessary preparations for our Whit-Sunday's trip, especially as on the following morning Betti was looking much as usual. The corners of her mouth did certainly seem to droop a little, and she looked very black under her eyes.

We ladies had, of course, dressed ourselves simply, but still pleasantly to look at. Emmi looked charming in her new *crétonne*, so much so that I wished Dr. Wrenzchen could by some chance have met her. Betti was dressed exactly like Emmi, and my dress was dove-coloured, with red fuchsias upon it, which is the fashion just now. Carl looked splendid, as he always does.

We had agreed to dine quietly at home first and to make use of the afternoon for our excursion, for to spend a whole day in one's new dresses is not, to my mind, an economical plan. Hence it was about three o'clock when we took our seats in a tolerably empty carriage and whizzed out of the Alexander Platz Station.

"You see, Carl dearest," said I, "one can manage to get seats on a Whit-Sunday; we could not have wished things better." Before Carl could reply the train was already halting at the Exchange Station. Carl then said: "The people who intend making the most of their holiday start early in the morning. Half Berlin is out in the country already."

I was just about to express my contrary opinion to this remark when we stopped at the Friedrichs Strasse, and then steamed away out of Berlin, past the Zoological Gardens to Charlottenburg. From there we walked on foot to the Halen-See, passing under the viaduct and across the heath.

"Children," said I, "look at the many different plants that grow out here;" and I myself gathered a modest little nosegay, as it is customary to do when out for a day in the country. My opinion is, however, that when

nature lies too close to a large city it is not altogether unadulterated, for traces of human beings are to be seen on all sides ; a single piece of greasy paper, a single egg-shell destroys the innocent impression of the whole tableau. There are so many ill-bred persons, especially out of doors.

Our destination was the restaurant on the Halen-See, for, to speak honestly, I am sick of Bernau and Biesenthal, where the rules relating to the holiday-makers are too strict and the trees are no greener for it. Now, at the Halen-See not only is the best beer kept in ice, but there are ozone springs of the first quality in the neighbourhood. Moreover, we know the proprietor personally, and last winter when we were there he told me that the next time we came he would give us a dish of choice asparagus. He had, as we afterwards learned, promised this to a number of the acquaintances ; but, of course, there is choice asparagus enough in the world, and a blessing it is both to restaurant-keepers and to the public as well.

We found a great many people, but were given a pretty table to ourselves with an exquisite view over the lake, upon which gondolas were fitting to and fro. Now and again a train sped away through the scenery on the horizon, while the foreground, as the poets say, was pleasantly enlivened by waiters in white aprons and a number of respectable people in festive attire.

We ordered asparagus for dinner forthwith, and meanwhile contented ourselves with a glass of "genuine," and then took a walk in the park. We found this very amusing, and I can frankly say that our toilettes created a good deal of attention. We then went on to the skittle-ground, and to our great surprise found several acquaintances there. Herr Kleines, Herr Theophile, a doctor from Hamburg who was introduced to us, and



seemed a highly cultivated man, and some others also. But who should we find sitting at the marker's table when we arrived but Dr. Wrenzchen! I bowed to him in a cordial way, but he did not come near us, only nodded his head with a forced kind of smile. All the others were polite enough to pay us some compliment, but he remained sitting where he was as if glued to his seat; this, naturally, I considered very disrespectful. The party invited Carl to join in the game, but he declined, for he said they were the right number without him. Hereupon Dr. Wrenzchen said that he would gladly give up his place. "Oh," said I, "if you are not going to play, dear doctor, would you take us out in a boat for a little? I know you like sailing." He looked quite perplexed and made all sorts of excuses, and his comrades, especially Herr Kleines, laughed in a most provoking manner, so that I could do nothing else but catch hold of Carl somewhat sharply, and drag him away, for he suddenly seemed inclined to join the game.

"Can't you see that we are not wanted?" said I angrily. "That doctor has acted contrary to the first rules of politeness; he didn't even rise when we came, and yet he has enjoyed that beautiful roast veal at our house. Herr Kleines, too, seemed inclined to go into a fit of laughter when, ironically, I asked the doctor to take us out in a boat. The young men of the present day are a vulgar set, that's my opinion."

In a word, I was greatly annoyed. "Rage away at them, Mina, till you feel better," said my sweet-tempered Carl.

Oh, where is there a husband as tender in his feelings as my Carl? I was about to add a few more remarks, not altogether of the sugar-candy kind, but the words stuck in my throat like a hot potato. For a carriage drove up in front of the park gates, and in it

sat Frau Bergfeldt—Frau Bergfeldt in blue silk, lying back in an affected way in the cushion, like a magnum bonum plum, and beside her sat a thinnish lady. On the back seat sat Herr Bergfeldt with a young girl, who, to judge by the length of her nose, was the daughter of the thin woman opposite to her. Emil was sitting on the box, and looked as boldly out into the world as if he had won a prize in the great lottery.

“They come out in a carriage, and we travel third class by the City line!” I exclaimed, but got no further, for Betti had become pale as death.—“Betti, my child,” I cried, “what is the matter? Carl fetch the doctor. Drag him from the skittle-ground here by the neck-tie. You see we need him!”—Carl flew off.—“Betti, you frighten me; what is it, dear child? I’ll forgive you everything.”—“It’s over now,” said Betti; “I now know enough! Do not be anxious, mother dear. You see I’m quite well again!”—“Let us go home now,” said I.—“No, please stay,” she exclaimed firmly. “He shall not say that I grieve one moment on his account.”—“Who?”—“He, whom I now hate—Emil!”

Carl returned, but without the doctor. He sent a message to say he would come when it got darker. “He needn’t trouble himself,” I replied sharply; “and moreover we don’t require his services now. Carl, I may tell you briefly that Betti and Emil have fallen out, and, what’s more, we ought to be glad of it. I never thought much of that poverty-stricken family. To see Betti thrown away upon such a penniless would-be judge. A pretty thing, to be sure! To-morrow you will have to write to Bergfeldt and tell him that we wish the engagement broken off; or, better still, I’ll go and tell her so in words that’ll make her ears buzz like telegraph wires!”

"Betti, what do you say to all this?" asked Carl, taking the girl by the arm and drawing her to him.— "I only hope that Emil will be happy with the young lady to whom he has now given his affection, and that she—may be too," was her reply.

"Oh, ho! so it's on account of somebody else, is it?" I exclaimed—"on account of that long, scraggy person who sat in the carriage—such a damsel, such a bag of bones! Well, I never!

I do not think that my frame of mind could have been called gracious at that moment. Still, to a certain extent I was thankful to know what it was that had been worrying Betti for some time past, and, above all, that we should now and for ever be rid of the Bergfeldts. We remained so as to have our asparagus, and later Herr Kleines joined us, and he certainly cheered up both of the girls with his stories. However, we started home earlier than we had originally intended. Asparagus, however tender it may be, when eaten with vexation, lies like lead on the stomach.

At home Carl found a letter from Herr Bergfeldt, four pages long—three pages in beating about the bush; and then he wound up by declaring that his son had been obliged to look about him for a wife with money, and had met with what he wanted; that his engagement to Betti had been entered upon in the thoughtless manner of youths; that our Betti could, of course, make a far better match than by marrying Emil.—"*She* dictated that to him, I'm pretty sure!" I exclaimed after reading the letter.

How long I remained in a state of rage I do not remember, but it was a good thing for the Bergfeldts that none of the lot came near me, for something like mischief was brewing in the air. Betti was the most composed of the party! She told us how she had

gradually noticed a change in Emil's behaviour towards her, that Frau Bergfeldt had once or twice spoken of the poor prospects of law-students, and about the advisability of their looking out for rich wives, and that she herself had long since felt that it must all come to an end. She assured us, moreover, that now the uncertainty was over she could take things more quietly, and be happier than she had been. This pacified me.

When Carl and I were alone we talked the matter over seriously. He too thought it best that the engagement should be broken off.

"Had I had my way, Betti would never have been engaged to Emil," said I. "Those to blame are Uncle Fritz and your own soft heart. And as for the doctor," I added, "he may stay where he is. Anything more rude than he was to-day I have never met with in my life. Never rising to meet me, and not coming even when told that my child is ill!"

"He couldn't, Wilhelmine, with the best of wills."

"If he had wanted to he could!"

"He really could not."

"And why not, pray?"

"He had burst his trousers in playing at skittles. He asked me to present his sincerest regards to you and your daughters meanwhile."

I was glad, I confess, to find that good reasons had really prevented the doctor from paying us his respects, but I should like to know why he need go to a tailor who cuts his things too scrimp. That'll have to be altered. Next day, however, he came to see us, and, so to say, launched forth with his excuses, which I graciously accepted. I made use of this opportunity, and told him that my nerves were in a very shaky state. He recommended me to walk out regularly, and added

that he did not consider me low enough to require a prescription.

This advice was followed, but the remedy was perhaps not exactly what was required ; at all events, a feeling of restlessness came over me which I could not shake off. In fact, both when asleep and when awake I was for ever seeing children before me—such a host of little children that I couldn't count them. For this the doctor prescribed Marienbad water, which always had the best effect upon him. "Doctor," said I to him, "do you then sometimes by day and by night see nothing but children before you?" "No," said he.—"Well, then, it's of no use your prescribing Marienbad water for me." So he merely returned to what he had said before, that I should go out walking regularly every day, and then went off on his rounds.

When he had gone, I said to myself : What is there in doctoring, after all ? Not much, I should say, for if one doesn't tell a doctor everything, they don't know anything. Dr. Wrenzchen might have suspected that it was these very walks which he recommended that made me ill.

For no matter in which direction one goes : outside the town gates, or in the town—wherever there is a large open space there are swarms of children. In the Thiergarten, in the Friedrichs-hain, in the Humboldts-hain, on the Marianne Platz near the Bethania, and more especially on the Belle-Alliance Platz, it would seem that one handful more or less of children would never be noticed. Children there are of all kinds, of every age, of every size, of every colour, by the hundred and thousand. Many are still in arms, and numbers may be seen lying by the two or three in basket perambulators, but the majority are far enough forward to run about alone. And they scramble and scuffle,

and waddle and toddle, they tumble and get up, they laugh and scream and cry and screech, and hit and bang one another, and eat and drink, but haven't a thought about the day itself.

When one watches that bare-legged throng : those that are sleeping, having become tired with the air ; those that are playing, digging in the sand-heaps, heedless of everything around them in their foolish work ; and again those that are running about catching one another—when one watches this mass of small innocent creatures, one suddenly feels hot all over when it is asked : What will become of them all ?

About the boys one need not make oneself anxious ; they learn what they require, become soldiers and have to manage to get on somehow, for probably only the few are born with independent means. But the little girls—there's the hitch !

When I was young we girls knew of nothing but that we were to get married when the time came ; it was only when a girl found that she had been left on the shelf that she took to being governess or some such occupation—and if not that, there were always relatives or connections to appeal to, and she had thus no need to worry about her winding-sheet. Aunts were always liked, and made use of too if the family was expecting an increase, or any member were lying ill, or a wife had died, or any other occasion where they could be of help. Nowadays, however, there is not often any thought about founding a family, except where one may happen to be required ; the family tie has become less strong, and there is an increase in the number of those who stand alone in the world. Hence it follows that quite young girls nowadays become governesses, and take to other such occupations, as if it were a settled matter that they were never to marry.

Formerly there were convents which young women could enter as nuns when they began to be knocked about in the world—although I should never have dreamt of such a thing myself; but nowadays girls learn, when quite young, how to shift for themselves when being thus knocked about, as lady-teachers, lady-artists, lady-engravers, and such things. Music has fallen in value so much that it is not considered worth while to take that up, and my experiences with Emmi only strengthen my disinclination for anything of the kind. The piano, moreover, is a domestic animal that devours too much time with its white and black teeth, and also swallows a lot of money instead of proving useful.

Betti has latterly taken it into her head to wish to be either a governess or an artist—she doesn't yet know which she would like best; she merely wants to do what numbers of young girls are doing who work, and work, and work to get a livelihood, simply that their lives may seem to have some definite object in view.

“Betti,” said I, “what do you want with painting, or wishing to educate other people's children; there is enough for you to do in helping with domestic duties in your own home?” She merely repeated my words “domestic duties” in a contemptuous tone of voice, and curled her lip up so high that I immediately determined to say no more; in such cases all one's words go to the cats. But the turning up of noses and curling of lips at small matters, and wanting to be off somewhere, is all perfectly useless; why can't they be content with what they've got?

Contentment is such a splendid invention that one cannot understand how it is that some persons think it of no value, and ceaselessly hunt after happiness. It is with happiness much as it is with beer—it sometimes

looks beautiful, but when it comes to be tasted it is sour, and when it seems to be running over the brim from pure strength it turns out that the stuff has merely been badly poured out, and is nothing but froth.

Who knows what the fate of that multitude of children may be, when they have to begin their struggle for existence, as life is called nowadays, and which girls go in for as well as boys now? When I see those many children I cannot help thinking of my own two girls: the thought goes through and through me, and I could cry aloud. If there weren't a God in Heaven still, it would verily be too dreadful here on this earth!

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#### SUMMER BREEZES.

THERE is no great art in doing the grand and travelling off somewhere by a cheap excursion train, simply in order afterwards to be able to say: "We have been to Switzerland, to Zoppot," or some other distant place in foreign parts. However, to take modest lodgings in the neighbourhood of Berlin so that wife and children may enjoy a change of air and the husband come out of a Sunday and have his pleasure in it too, that I consider no very easy task. This I call laying aside one's crown of pride and putting on the simple cotton dress of virtue.

Yet this is why we decided to take summer quarters at Tegel. The house and its surroundings pleased us very much, and it was also convenient for Carl.

My husband is doing a very good business in spite of the protective duty; were it not for that duty he would, I think, in a couple of years belong to the upper ten thousand. Of course, therefore, he cannot leave his



work for weeks at a time, nor is it likely that I or the children would forsake him. No ; he shall see the grateful faces of those for whom he is working once every week at least. And Tegel is conveniently situated for such a purpose.

Moreover, the village of Tegel is not very far from Castle Tegel and its park, and in the park is the grave of Alexander von Humboldt, that wonderfully great man who invented the globe which has become one of the favourite decorations of a room, in spite of its blue colour not always harmonising with the furniture covers. When an historical background of this kind is close by, one naturally, when walking about, feels the influence of genius, and is happy in the consciousness of belonging to the cultivated class.

Emmi has remained in town with her father to take charge of the house, and I and Betti have come out here. Betti, I felt, would have to be dragged out of her old circumstances, which were for ever reminding her of that faithless fellow Emil. The girl was becoming so silent and quiet that it cut me to the heart when I watched her without her knowing. Yet I dared not say anything, for I knew it would immediately be followed by harsh words and the slamming of doors. All this, I hoped, would come to an end in Tegel. We have charming quarters. The same large lime-trees and elms that shade the roof of the small church shelter the windows of our front room from the sun, and when we sit outside the front door we have the old churchyard with its tombs, its weeping willows and flowering shrubs, right before us. The view is a solemn one, to be sure, but those who have a clear account book in Heaven are edified and exalted by such a view. I don't fancy Frau Krause would be able to stand it. But of that horrible occurrence later.

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At the back we have two small rooms looking on to the garden, and also a kitchen ; the other half of the cottage is built exactly like ours, and the people who rent the cottage occupy that half ; these people are too common for us to associate with for although born in Tegel they had never heard anything about Humboldt or of his greatness.

We had, in fact, made up our minds not to be very cordial with the natives of the place, and it is well that we did so—one is so easily misunderstood. They take their revenge by calling us the ghostly family. The way that came about is this.

There are in Tegel a most fearful amount of midges which are hatched by the lake. When Betti and I took our first evening walk along the shores of the water we returned home pretty sights. These scourges of the human race had made a dead set at my neck, and I came home looking as if I had a *goître* ; I do not deny that my neck is a little fat, but Carl has always said mine was a very beautiful one, and in any case there was no need to have it spoilt. So when we next went for a walk we rubbed our necks and faces with oil of laurel, which is said to keep off midges, but the stuff smells so horribly that it utterly destroys one's enjoyment of balmy nature. I therefore wrote to Emmi to bring out, when she next came, the two thin muslin petticoats which belonged to the girls' evening dresses. Out of these we made two long Egyptian veils, which protect the upper part of the body and one's arms. When we sit at the edge of the wood revelling in the views which nature presents, we decorate these veils of ours with wild flowers, and our parasols with large leaves. This poetic occupation the Tegel people, in their ignorance, consider craziness, and call us the ghostly family on account of the white veils.—Just to

vex them we have walked unconcerned through the village in this costume and our decorated parasols ; we meant also to show them that we were far above paying any attention to their ridiculous prejudices.

Betti and I were accordingly thrown entirely upon ourselves. This would have been pleasant enough if Betti had put aside a little of that uncommunicative nature of hers. But there were hours during which she never spoke a word, did not answer questions addressed to her, and when pressed merely said : "Mamma, you always insist upon knowing things better ; what's the use of my little bit of wisdom to you ?"

A few days ago she came in with a white rabbit which she had bought for a few pence from some boys in the village who had been chasing and teasing it.— "Child," said I, "What are you going to do with the horrible creature ?"—"I want to have something to love," she answered. "Do you not love me, Betti ?"—"Oh yes, I don't mean that ; but the rabbit will make me think of other things, and it is so pretty, has such clear red eyes !"—The question now was, where was the animal to be kept ? The lowest drawer of the chest of drawers happened to be empty, so it was put in there, and I was obliged to allow this, as Betti seemed really to delight in the small creature. We took it with us when we went out walking. But the drawer and the room smelt very strong of the captive creature, however much they were aired.

Our life soon slipped into a regular kind of groove. Of a morning we first had a bathe in the lake, and Betti soon began to swim beautifully. Then we had our breakfast and Betti attended to her rabbit, while I put our rooms to rights. Then came the woman who did the rough work, while I prepared the dinner ; and

at midday we dined. After that we took two or three winks of sleep, and then prepared for our walk.

Of course we were provided with books to read. Uncle Fritz had been asked to get us Humboldt's 'Cosmos.' When he brought it he said: "Wilhelmine, you will find it beyond you." But I gave it him nicely for that speech, by saying to him:

"I have often enough, unfortunately, observed that you undervalue the capacities of women, because you are a free thinker, but the fact of your not understanding a thing is very far from proving that I may not be able to follow it!"

He laughed in a jeering kind of way, and said: "I wish you joy with the 'Cosmos.' Send it me back soon, that it may be returned to the library."

This made me feel it a positive duty to read the 'Cosmos.' We therefore one day took it and the rabbit, which we had named Sniff, out into the woods, and Betti read aloud to me about the mountains in Mexico and about the strata of rocks that lie on the top. The first day I went to sleep over it, unfortunately, for the day was very hot; the second time we had had beans for dinner, which made us both feel drowsy. The third time Betti read very badly because Sniff was always trying to get off, and she had perpetually to be catching hold of him. We have now determined to leave the 'Cosmos' till next winter, when we can read the book quietly at home; it would be ridiculous for it to be said that we couldn't understand a printed book! That is only presumption on the part of Uncle Fritz.

We had a few days of incessant rain, which was rather melancholy, especially as Betti was mostly out of spirits. Without Sniff the days would have been intolerable. Betti made it a blue jacket, and we were both very much amused at seeing it jump about in it.

On the Saturday evenings my Carl and Emmi came out to us. These were truly *fête* days! They generally brought all kinds of nice things out with them, and if the day was bright and sunny we went out into the woods and enjoyed the things there. How short such a Sunday seems no one can imagine! When Carl got into the tramcar in the evening to return home, it seemed to me as if he had only just come; and when Betti and I afterwards sat down outside our cottage with the churchyard before us, I sometimes felt as if there would come a time when he would take me in his arms and I should sleep soundly, very soundly on his breast, never to be parted from him in all eternity. My dear, dear Carl!

We were, however, not to be altogether without society, for the Krauses came to Tegel; I had, it is true, fallen out with Frau Krause on the day of the christening, owing to that boy Eduard of hers; however, we met one morning on the narrow bathing-path, so that I could not cut her. She bowed quite kindly, and I must say I am glad at last to have some one to have a regular chat with, so I asked her to come and see me in the afternoon.

She came, but was alone. Eduard had gone with his father butterfly-hunting by the lake.

At first our conversation did not get along very smoothly. However, she found our coffee excellent, and one word led to another, and to my delight I soon learned that they too had given up their intercourse with the Bergfeldts.

She told me it was impossible to associate with the family any longer. He was again deep in debt, and Emil had become engaged to a wealthy girl only to get out of his difficulties. She told me also that he now always wore light suits, and it was supposed his

bride paid for them, but she could not be sure about that, although every one knew that the Bergfeldts themselves had no money to spend.

"Yes," I remarked, "they are in a wretched plight."

"Let us rather say badly off," suggested Frau Krause. "I have often noticed that most of their coffee-cups have no handles, and when I was last there she had tea-spoons such as one gets at the *Neue Welt*."

"Her husband's eyes will be opened some day when she is arrested," I replied. "We may consider ourselves fortunate in having nothing to do with them now, for they are sure to be carried off in the green van some day. And two years is the least that she'll get."

It was a mercy that Betti happened to be feeding Sniff in the garden, for as soon as she hears the name Bergfeldt down goes her head. But she shall one of these days hear what the world thinks about the family.

Herr Krause proposed to be back with Eduard by four o'clock, so we went down to the lake to meet them. The steamer had just come in from Saatwinkel, and a number of people were coming ashore, so the pier presented a lively appearance. Carriages too were waiting. Herr Krause and Eduard were already there with their butterfly-nets. We greeted one another and talked about this and that, when suddenly there was a loud scream. It was Frau Krause who had screamed. "Eduard!" she cried. But Eduard was standing quietly on the pier looking down into the water.

What had happened? People were hurrying to the spot. A boy, so it was said, had tumbled into the water. Some fishermen unfastened and put off a boat, but before they had got it off, a man had dived into the water with the utmost speed. It was an anxious mo-

ment. "There he is!" cried the bystanders. "Has he got the boy?"—"No, but he's diving again." And the man who had already once plunged into the water, disappeared again. There he was again, however—and had now got hold of the boy, whom he placed in the boat, which had meanwhile come up.

On the shore stood a lady; she had wanted to leap into the lake, for the boy now lying in the boat was her child. She had to be held back with force. The boat now came ashore and the boy was given to her; there he lay, pale and lifeless at her feet, and she burst into tears. Meanwhile the boy was speedily carried off to the bathing-house.

It seemed to me as if all the beauty of nature had suddenly vanished, when Death so unexpectedly appeared amidst our bright and sunny surroundings, to call a young life away to his distant, gloomy kingdom.

I seemed no longer to see the blue lake with its pretty shores, and the bright sky, but saw only the bathing-house which hid the drowned boy from our sight, and I gazed eagerly at the people gathered round its closed door, as if they could have told me whether there was any hope of restoring the boy's life. The child's parents were in the bathing-house. Their carriage was waiting at a little distance, the coachman was standing by the horses and had his eyes fixed upon the wooden house by the water, and seemed to be thinking: would the boy ever again ask for a ride on the horses? Would he ever again say: "Johann, let us go for a drive, and I'll sit by you on the box, and you lend me the reins"?

It was a hot summer afternoon, and yet it seemed to me from time to time as if a cold breeze came blowing across the water that made me feel chilly. And all around was so hushed, in spite of the many people.

In a whisper Betti said to me : "Mamma, it was a dreadful thing that I saw !"

"What did you see ?" said I, in a low voice too. "If the boy recovers I will tell you," she replied almost inaudibly. "Perhaps I may have been mistaken, but Frau Krause saw it too."

"Where are the Krauses ?"

We looked all round for them, but they had vanished.

I was about to question Betti further when the door of the bathing-house opened. The people left the pier and went down to the shore. "Is he alive ?"—"He is alive." Then came the father, carrying the child, who was rolled up in a plaid and soft shawls. The mother followed supported by the bathing-woman. They took their seats in the carriage, the coachman mounted the box and gave a look into the carriage. His face brightened up, and then off they drove at full trot.

The crowd dispersed. Only one group of young men remained as if waiting for some one. And the one they were waiting for now came out of the bathing-house. He was wet through and through, for it was the young man who had saved the boy's life.

His companions went up to him and shook him by the hand, and then seemed to deliberate as to what they should do. I went up to them and said : "Gentlemen, I live close by, and will gladly attend to your brave comrade. He cannot be allowed to remain in his wet clothes." They made some excuses, but they little knew me—and I did not give way.

They came with us. In front of our cottage they took leave of their friend and of us, saying, they would call towards evening for him, and meanwhile put up at the Castle Restaurant. One of the young men came forward, and, as they were leaving, laid his hand on his



friend's shoulder, looked at him earnestly and affectionately, and said: "Take care of yourself, Felix." Those two must be good friends, thought I, and was pleased. The young men then went off towards the Castle and we turned indoors.

"Allow me now to introduce myself to you," said the young man as we entered the house. "My name is Felix Schmidt."

"And I am Frau Buchholz," said I. "But come in; this way to the bedroom. Here is a house-coat of my husband's and here are trousers and waistcoat, and here a night-shirt and socks. His slippers you will find in the corner over there. Just change your things and make yourself comfortable. Shall I make you a cup of coffee, or would you like some spirit?"

"Well, I don't think I should be any the worse for a little spirit."—"You shall have some then, but now make haste and get out of your wet things."

I went into the kitchen and made up a good fire. After a while the door leading from the bedroom into the kitchen was opened, and Herr Felix Schmidt stood on the threshold.

"I am giving a great deal of trouble, I fear," he said, embarrassed.

"Not at all," said I, taking him by the arm; "but come this way to the sitting-room."

I got him to sit in the large armchair and looked at him as he sat there. In outward appearance he might have been my Carl, and yet again he was not. My Carl is dark, this young man is fair; my Carl wears whiskers, whereas he has a brown moustache, which suits him very well indeed. And yet they are alike, for my Carl looked just as fresh, and as young and blooming, when we first met each other, and when as yet I had never dreamt how much I should one day love him.

Meanwhile the kettle had boiled. The woman from the other side of the cottage was waiting for me in the kitchen, and asked whether she could be of any help. I was sorry now that I had always kept her at a little distance, and actually felt a little ashamed to think of it, but I gladly accepted her offer to assist me.

So we fetched Herr Schmidt's wet clothes, wrung them out, and hung them on the line in the garden, in the sun. His boots we stuck upon two poles. They had been full of water, and there was a large pool of water on the floor where he had stood. The woman brought a mop and dried up the wet.

It was a blessing that Carl had brought out a bottle of good Meuckow cognac, for I could now brew the young fellow a delicious glass of grog. And so I did. For ourselves I made some strong coffee ; we had had some already that afternoon, it is true, but needed something after our fright and excitement.

There in the sitting-room were Felix Schmidt and Betti when I entered with the grog. The two were talking away quite gaily together. I told him that I considered he had to-day saved a family from a great sorrow. He replied that any one would have done the same in his place. He said he had seen how the boy fell into the water and happened to be nearest the spot.

Betti asked if he had noticed how the boy got into the water.

Herr Felix Schmidt did not answer at once, but then asked was there not another boy on the pier beside him ?

"Yes, there was," said Betti.

"Do you know the boy ?"

"Oh yes," said I, "and a regular good for-nothing he is."

"I should not let him go about alone unless properly looked after," said Herr Schmidt.

"Why not?" I asked.

"He might fall in himself some day," he replied briefly.

"Oh, no," said I smiling, "weeds are not so easily got rid off."

Herr Schmidt had finished his first glass, and so I went to mix him a second. The sun had meanwhile gone round a little, so the woman and I had to move the wet clothes. They were, however, drying fairly well. His linen would soon be ready for ironing, so I put the heaters in the fire. Betti came in and said that Herr Schmidt's cigars had all got soaked, and he would very much like a smoke.

"How do you know that?"

"Because I asked him."

"What made you think of that?"

"Well, Emil never could be a quarter of an hour without smoking."

"Your father's cigars are on the top of the wardrobe. Take in this brandy and water to him, and this bread-and-butter also—he must be hungry."

I could have shouted for joy when she was gone, for this was the first time for many weeks that Betti had mentioned Emil's name, and generally she was upset the moment any one spoke of him. So perhaps she is becoming indifferent to him—at last.

The heaters were now red hot, and I set about the ironing. His linen could not, of course, be made to look as nice as it might have done if newly starched, but I could, at all events, show I was perfectly up in the art. His underclothing was good and neatly marked. The young man was tidy, that one could see. His waistcoat I ironed too. My Carl always wears white waistcoats in summer, and maintains that they are never so nice as when I do them up for him.

Betti came in again with Herr Schmidt's watch, which was full of water and wouldn't go. "Does the time seem so long to him?" I asked. "No," she replied, "we were only saying how quickly it was passing, and this made him look at his watch." I hung the watch up above the fireplace; it was a valuable gold watch, not a mere latchkey such as I once found hanging at the end of Emil Bergfeldt's watch-chain. The Bergfeldts were, in fact, an utter mistake.

The woman of the house I had sent out to the butcher's, and she now came in with the cutlets, and set about peeling the potatoes. The clothes were getting dry, and wherever I could I made the irons help in this. It seemed to me almost as if I had been working for that beloved Carl of mine, and to work for him is my greatest pleasure in life. When ready, I laid the clothes tidily on my bed, and the boots were put beside it; the woman had given them a brush and made them look as bright as was possible.

"Herr Schmidt," said I, on going into the sitting-room, "everything now is in the loveliest state of confusion"—I didn't see why I mightn't make a little joke—"so this masquerading can now come to an end."

He was astonished to find how quickly we had put everything to rights for him; but then, do men understand anything about ironing, I should like to know?

Betti and I now laid the cloth in the front room, and moreover we laid places for seven persons—for Herr Schmidt and his four companions and our two selves. Wine we had in the house, and the woman provided us with glasses and plates. She behaved admirably, and I determined to be more sociable with her in future.

When Herr Felix had changed his things and came in to us he looked as if he had just stepped out of

a band-box, so trim and neat was he. Really a splendid, handsome young fellow! His neck-tie was, however, missing, and I could not find one of Carl's. A happy thought struck Betti. She took my scissors and cut a strip off her ghostly veil and manufactured a most successful neck-tie, which she was obliged to put on for him, as he said he would not wear it otherwise.

By the time his friends came the potatoes were ready, and the cutlets were soon cooked also. They all seemed to enjoy their supper, and we were a very merry party. Herr Felix's special friend raised his glass and said he wished in the name of all his comrades to drink the health of the hospitable family, and to thank them for the great kindness shown to their friend, so glasses were knocked together, and they drank to the welfare and happiness of the Buchholz family. I proposed a toast too, and said I only regretted that my Carl was not present, and hoped we might one day see them all here again. And they promised to come. We spent a delightful evening. But good-bye had to be said at last, and Herr Felix seemed really sorry to have to return to Berlin. But he had to be off in the end, and so followed the others, who had got a long start of him.

We cleared away the things and then sat down a little in front of our cottage. It was wonderfully beautiful, for nature does not go to sleep during these bright summer nights, only dozes as it were, for the morning comes so soon.

The trees and shrubs threw their perfume out into the night and the crickets were chirping in the hedges.

"Mamma," said Betti, "I shall send the rabbit away to-morrow. I can't put up with it any longer; it makes the whole place smell."

"Thank God!" said I.

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After a while Betti whispered to me: "Mamma, I must tell you that the boy did not fall into the water by himself—young Krause pushed him in."

"Betti!" I exclaimed, horrified.

"I saw it, and Frau Krause saw it too, for she became deathly pale, and Herr Felix noticed it also."

"Did he say so?"

"No; but I know he did; I saw it plainly written in his eyes."

I put my arms round Betti and she cuddled up to me in a way she had not done for long. We did not speak, both of us followed our own thoughts, and it was not till it had become very late, and the sky in the east had begun to grow light, that we went indoors.

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#### A HARVEST-HOME.

I MUST again send you a letter, but to-day out of pure delight. You have often sympathetically held the umbrella of consolation over me when the clouds of trouble poured down upon me and mine, and so you shall be the first to whom I send the pleasant weather-report of the family.

The prospects are these. Betti's depression owing to Emil is on the wane. Dr. Wrenzchen's minimum towards Emmi seems to be passing to a maximum. My Carl and I are constant as ever and cheerful. Uncle Fritz undecided. You shall by degrees hear how all this came about.

Sniff, the rabbit, was put out of doors, the chest of drawers well scoured with soap and water; Humboldt's 'Cosmos' was sent back, as we had no time for reading, and after all, there seems little use in knowing how high the mountains in Mexico are. On the other

hand, we explored the forest at Tegel and discovered beautiful places. One spot we called *Wilhelmine's Seat*; another *Betti's Pavilion*, for the trees stand there in a circle forming quite a large hall; the meadow in front of the forest we called *Sniff's Savannah*, which was meant to have a reference to Humboldt. A hill in the wood with a view over the lake we called *Carl's Hill*, in honour of my husband. I determined some day to have a picnic at that place.

Now as we did not know exactly what to do with the rabbit, we gave it to little Krause on condition that he would not tease it. Herr Krause promised to look after the animal, and as he is a member of the Society for the Protection of Animals, our minds were set at rest.

When Eduard came to fetch Sniff, I accompanied him across the churchyard. "There are people lying buried here," said I; "what would you say if that little boy who tumbled into the lake had had to be carried here and buried?" He did not answer, but busied himself with the rabbit. "What if he had got drowned, Eduard?" I asked further.—"He ought to have been able to swim," answered that heartless brat. "Oh, is that what you think? But now tell me, it was only by accident that you pushed him, wasn't it?"—"He fell in by himself," he answered snappishly. "Eduard, what if I tell you that I don't believe that?"—"Mamma says he began the quarrel."—"That weak, delicate boy, Eduard? I can't believe it."—"But it's true; Mamma saw it."—"Then I suppose it is true," I replied; and then said, "now run home and take good care of Sniff." And off he went like the wind. I could not get over the worthlessness of that boy. What would become of him? What would such training as he got lead to? I fancy his mother will one day shed

tears of blood over him, when it is too late ! Too late ! Those terrible words when a person's own wrong-doing stands as their accuser. There's no use in stopping one's ears then !

Were it not that the bathing and the air of Tegel seemed to be doing Betti an enormous deal of good, I should have been glad to leave the place, and the sooner the better, for I dreaded every day having a quarrel with Frau Krause. However, as the harvest was nearly over and a harvest-home at hand, I preferred remaining, especially as it seemed to me that this festival would give me an opportunity of inviting one or two friends to come out and to spend the day with us.

I discussed this plan with Betti, and then added in an off-hand way : " How would it be if we were to ask Herr Felix and his friends to come out and see us ? " Betti answered : " I should say it would be a little wanting in tact to give them a direct invitation. " — " But they promised to look in upon us again, that evening when they bade us good-bye. " — " If they come of their own accord I should be delighted, " said Betti, " but if you send them an invitation, I, for one should go home. " — " What should you wish to go home for ? Your father and Emmi will be coming here, and Uncle Fritz too. " — " Nevertheless I should go. " — " Betti, do be reasonable, " said I. Bettie was about to answer again, but before she could open her mouth I had left the room and slammed the door after me. If I hadn't done it at first, she would have ended in slamming it. I wanted her to judge for herself what an abominable practice it was.—There's nothing more effective in education than example !

In the afternoon I went into town and moreover alone, as Betti was out of humour, and on the journey all



kinds of thoughts flitted through my mind : that his heart is in its right place has been proved, and that he is orderly and well-to-do I could see by his clothes and his linen. He is in the retail trade. My Carl began in a small way too . . . . Why should the two not build their own nest—a shop in front with a room at the back, and the living-rooms upstairs ?

Yet how was I to get him out to Tegel ?

I do not deny the existence of Providence, and so thought to myself : “ If I happen to meet Herr Felix accidentally, then that meeting I shall look upon as a sign from Heaven.” And as there is no reason why one should not assist the decrees of Providence, I resolved to go down the König Strasse and to see if I could, by chance, find him at his place of business. He was not there, however. Where should he be, however, but at our house in eager conversation with my Carl, and, moreover, about a parcel of woollen socks which his principal wished him to purchase from my husband ! “ This is verily the voice of Heaven,” said I to myself, and waited till they had settled their business and the young man was about to go. I told him I was glad to see him again, and added : “ Next Sunday is harvest festival in Tegel.”—“ I intend to be there if the weather keeps fine and it does not rain,” he replied, colouring up. “ You can’t be afraid of wet, I should think,” said I cheerily as he bade us good-bye. “ Well,” thought I to myself, “ if the weather on Sunday is fine, that’ll be a third sign, and nothing will induce me to act contrary to the will of Providence.”

Carl, who had been glad to hear from me how admirably the young man had behaved, now also called him considerate as well, for it was he who had persuaded his principal to do business with us, and Carl said that it promised to work well for the future. . “ Carl,” said

I, "you see how an act of kindness can yield interest. If I had not shown him the attention I did, who knows whether you would have got him to take the socks so readily; and Betti, moreover, seems to have taken a liking to him." Carl flew up at this, and exclaimed: "My daughter is worth more to me than a parcel of socks! Have you not had enough with your match-making yet, Wilhelmine?"—"Carl," I replied, with quiet dignity, "what is settled in Heaven will come to pass on earth. The young man's business is, moreover, in your line. We have but the two daughters—how nice it would be if at some future day we could speak of 'Buchholz and Son, wholesale dealers in woollen wares and fancy articles'!" Carl considered for a little, and then replied: "If you will promise me to keep your hands out of the matter, I will not act contrary to your wishes."

"That I will promise you," said I, "but I have already given him a half-and-half sort of invitation for Sunday next."—"See how incorrigible you are, Wilhelmine; but this time I shall keep my eyes open, remember."

So I packed up such things as might be necessary for our guests on Sunday, and then went round to Uncle Fritz to tell him to come and bring a friend or two. I did this so that I might have some excuse to make to Betti for all the plates, knives, forks and spoons I brought back with me.

On Sunday the weather was magnificent!

My husband had come on the Saturday evening.

Fritz and Herr Kleines were to come the following afternoon, and Emmi was to bring the Police-lieutenant's daughter Mila out with her.

We waited for some time for Emmi, but in vain, and Uncle Fritz also did not turn up, so there was nothing

to be done but go to the village without them. We did this, and saw the gaily decorated harvest-waggon pass with the harvest-folk, carrying their tools. The procession was very pretty, but it did not give me much pleasure, for I was anxious about Emmi's not coming; and Uncle Fritz and his friends had also not come. At last there came Emmi, but alone. "Where is Mila?" I asked.—"She said she had no proper dress."—"What nonsense!" And why are you so late?"—"I was watching the tramway being laid in the Französische Strasse."—"Emmi," said I, "and what took you to the Französische Strasse, and what have you got to do with tramways?"—"Oh, Mamma, it is so interesting?"—"You never used to think so."—"But when everything is so well explained, it is delightful!"—"And who has been explaining tramways to you? Out with what you have got to say."—"Doctor Wrenzchen," she said shyly.—"What's that you say?"—"The new line goes right past his house."—"How do you come to know that?"—"I met him in a tramcar the other day."—"Who?"—"Doctor Wrenzchen; it was quite accidental."—"And to-day again accidentally?" I asked.—"No, he fetched me."—"To see the tramway?"—"Yes; and then we drove to the Hallé gateway and back."—"Did he invite you to take the trip?"—"Yes, but I paid the fare myself; he never pays for me when we go by tramway."—"And so you make appointments, do you? Do you not remember how rude he was to me lately?"—"Mamma, you quite misunderstood him; he is so good!"—"We shall have to return to this subject," said I; "but I cannot understand your allowing a man to make you advances, when he has already shown you the cold shoulder more than once; and to think of your meeting him in tramcars! I shall have to keep you out at Tegel with me."

And now I ask any one to make out what that Dr. Wrenzchen means. I give him the finest of roast veals, and he does not allow me to notice anything, yet scarcely have I turned my back when he goes philandering after the innocent child. Thank goodness, in the tramcars they are under supervision!

The gentlemen had gone on before; I and my daughters followed them to the Castle Restaurant, where the festival was in full swing; and there too we found Herr Felix and his friend Max. We exchanged greetings, engaged a table, and sat down comfortably.

Uncle Fritz called upon the young people to start a dance. Herr Felix asked Betti to be his partner, and Herr Kleines wanted Emmi to dance with him. She, however, declared that she did not care about dancing, and he went off in the sulks. "Emmi, how could you be so rude to him?" I asked. "Oh, Mamma, you don't know how horrid he is. Lately in the Friedrich Strasse, near the tramway, he one evening came up and offered to walk with me, and was so rude and pressed himself upon me so that I could not get rid of him. If Dr. Wrenzchen had not come, I don't know what I should have done."—"You tell things all mixed up," said I; "what were you doing in the Friedrich Strasse?"—"I had gone in the tram."—"And where did Dr. Wrenzchen come from?"—"He was buying me some of those red French sweetmeats."—"And what about Herr Kleines?"—"When I was waiting outside the shop he came up and spoke to me."—"Emmi, this is worse than frivolous behaviour!"—"Oh, no; when Dr. Wrenzchen had scolded Herr Kleines pretty thoroughly, and I was trembling hand and foot with excitement, he merely said—" "What did he say?"—"That it would be more comfortable in the tramcar."—"Was that all?"—"Yes."—"Did Herr Kleines not

recognise you?"—"I think not, for I had a pretty thick veil on."—"Now Emmi, do you consider it right to walk out like that? I cannot have you get into such scrapes any more, and therefore forbid you to arrange any meetings with Dr. Wrenzchen again. I mean, moreover, to have a word or two with Herr Kleines."

I looked about for him, and soon brought him to the point. At first he denied knowing anything about it, but I took him so sharply to account, that he at last excused himself by saying that he did not recognise the lady.—"All the worse then," said I, "that you should be such a loafer, and go after the daughters of respectable people utterly unknown to you."—"Besides," added he, "I left her at once when the doctor told me the lady with him was his *fiancée*; and as the lady in question appears to have been your daughter, I suppose I may offer you my congratulations."—"Are you saying what is true?" I asked. Thereupon he acted as if he were the offended party, and said he wondered how I could doubt his word. "If that's the case, I will pardon your youthful frivolity; but you must promise me to alter your ways, to turn over a new leaf, and not to speak of this matter." This he promised me. It had become chilly; and as he affected to be suffering from a cough, he considered it wiser to return home.—I had learned enough!

We others enjoyed ourselves for some time afterwards. Betti bloomed like a rose, and Uncle Fritz danced away like a madman with the peasant girls. Herr Max, Felix's friend, was rather quiet; and when I asked him why he was so serious, he said that he was enjoying his friend's happiness. I did not make any reply, but inwardly I was sounding a trumpet to myself for sheer joy. The two friends must have had a talk together, and what it was about I knew well

enough without being told. I've learned so much long since.

Later, when we were returning to our modest little summer quarters, Carl said to me: "Wilhelmine, I think the firm Buchholz and Son would do very well. He is a splendid fellow—but do me the one favour, and do not drive at them."—"Carl," said I, "just as you think best. I have come to see that a good thing must bide its time. But I must tell you I wish Emmi to remain in Tegel with me. If the doctor means it seriously, he will know where to find her."

"What's the matter with the doctor, Wilhelmine?"

"You just wait and see; I shall be his mother-in-law yet, and then we can settle our accounts; he is pretty deeply in my books."

We were very merry till the gentlemen had to be off to town.—In the night I dreamt that Dr. Wrenzchen and Emmi were off in a tramcar together, and that I ran after it without being able to catch them. It is to be hoped that this dream does not borebode evil.

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### SECRETS.

WHEN the weather gets cold I certainly prefer town to the country. When the leaves out at Tegel began to put on fashionable colours we returned to Berlin. The Krauses went back long before we did, because his holidays were at an end. I was glad to see them trundle off. The day before they left—as I heard from the people they had been living with—they put Sniff into a stewing-pan and ate him with vinegar sauce! It is beyond my comprehension how people can be so deceitful. Such a lovely creature as Sniff was! All that can

be said is that people are not all alike in their finer feelings.

Next summer we shall probably go out to Tegel again. Perhaps I may have to go alone. I shall look up all the dear old places in the forest, and think of the past and of the future, and converse in spirit with my daughters, who are scarcely likely to be with me, because—well, because they aren't.

Meanwhile, Christmas-time had come round again with all its secrets, one from another, the young from the old, and the old from the young. And these secrets are as eagerly guarded as if the greatest misfortune would arise were they to be disclosed. And yet they are nothing but pure affection.

But at times affection has a somewhat bitter taste as well ; and as I have no liking whatever for anything bitter, I would rather forego the joyous drink if bitters are to be poured into it.

When children are small it is not difficult to get at their little secrets without their noticing it ; one has, in fact, to be careful that they do not drop out, like the petals off a rose that has long been on its stalk. As children grow bigger, however, they learn to take better care of themselves, and manage to keep a secret, although their whole being betrays the possession of that which their little hearts cannot lock up firmly enough. But when they have become grown up and have learned to love something beyond their God and their parents, then they are as silent about their secrets as the mountain that concealed the enchanted prince. And if a mother wants to know that prince's christian and family name, she will have to wait for some stray chance, and follow its track like a private detective. We have all been young, and know quite well how it is !

My two daughters had provided themselves in good time with the materials necessary for their embroidery work for Christmas; and as nowadays not only are towels and dusters, but even wash-cloths adorned with modern old-German cross-stitch patterns, of course I had nothing to say against such work. It is the fashion, and it is at any rate better than that time-squandering reading of novels, for, after all, what does it matter whether a certain couple one doesn't know, manage to make it up or whether they don't?

The girls were very busy, especially Emmi. If I, once in a way, forgot myself and said: "Well, Emmi, you seem to be preparing some very extraordinary surprise for us this Christmas!"—she was a little put out and replied: "Only don't expect too much, Mamma; you know the proverb: 'Let it be little, but from the heart.'"—But as I knew that she sat up half the night, I could not get my mind at rest, and, therefore, as is the duty of every mother, I took to playing the spy.—Yet, carefully as I watched, she was too cunning for me, and although I was, day by day, more firmly convinced that she was keeping some secret from me, apart from embroidered handkerchiefs and things, still I did not manage to obtain any clue. If I asked Betti about the matter, her answer was: "She doesn't tell me anything either of what she's about," and with Carl I did not care to discuss the subject, for he had latterly been in such particularly good spirits that I did not wish to upset him with family quibblings. I now wish I had spoken to him, however, although all has turned out for the best. Still there would have been one body the less, full of vexation.

One evening Emmi and Betti were sitting in their room working at their Christmas presents, and I was giving audience to my own thoughts, when the door-



bell rang. I was out like a shot, for I had firmly made up my mind not to leave the smallest trifle uncontrolled in the house—therefore I opened the door myself. “Am I right here for the Buchholzes?” asked a young man who looked like a tradesman’s apprentice.—“Yes, certainly, the Buchholzes live here.”—“Well then,” he replied, “can I speak to Miss Emmi a minute?” All at once the scales seemed to drop from my eyes. “Here’s the key to the secret,” seemed to be called out within me, so without further ado, I replied: “That’s all right—I’m Miss Emmi myself.”—“You’ll have been lying a goodish time on the shelf then, but maybe the braces ’ull help you yet,” said the impudent wretch, and he brought out a parcel containing a pair of half-finished braces which he threw over his shoulders as if to show them off. “Master’s compliments, and he thinks surely never was a body long enough for these, unless he’s a born giant. Or maybe the gentleman means to use the braces as trouser-straps as well.”

“They do seem too long, it’s true,” I replied as calmly as I could. “I’ll go and measure them again. Call back in half an hour. Here are a couple of pence for you.”—“You’ll do better to keep them till I come back and get paid for the whole. Good-evening, mum!”

The insolent fellow then made off. I took a look at the braces. They were embroidered with the finest silk, a lot of rosebuds and forget-me-nots; a desperately troublesome bit of work, and at least half a yard too long.—For whom could Emmi have been plaguing herself so?—I was determined to find this out! So upstairs I went to my daughters’ room, and knocked so that they might have time to hide their Christmas secrets. I entered then as if I knew nothing whatever. “Emmi,” I said, “a youth has brought these braces with a message that they are far too long.”—Emmi

looked at me perfectly aghast and exclaimed: "Now it's all spoiled!"—"What is all spoiled?" I cried, terrified.—"And we had all so looked forward to it!"—"But, child——"

"You see, Mamma, what it comes to when you persist in mixing yourself up with everything!" said Betti to me reproachfully. "How so?"—"Well, there's no use now in keeping it a secret any longer. You'd never rest till you knew every detail. Emmi is engaged to Dr. Wrenzchen; Papa has given his consent, and Dr. Wrenzchen's parents have also agreed to it, and we wanted to present the couple to you as a Christmas surprise. The braces are, of course, for the doctor, who always wears his trousers so fearfully short, and in trying to remedy the evil the braces have been made too long. There, now you know all; those stupid things" (here she pointed to the roses and forget-me-nots) "would in any case have soon put you on to the right track."

I had to sit down. Emmi engaged to the doctor! And behind my back! Without my knowing! My feelings must have been like those of a king who has been robbed of his authority. My authority in the family was undermined. And by whom? By a stranger. By that doctor, who had so often thwarted me, and had now deceitfully won Carl over to his side. This was too much for me. If I had dashed my head in full swing against the wall, I could not have felt more dazed than I did.

My first feeling was to burst out into a loud laugh, but I controlled myself as my child's happiness depended upon what I did now. Moreover, I could pluck the crow in question with the doctor till the bitter end at some future day. I therefore composed myself, rose, and went up to Emmi much moved, and embraced

and kissed her. "You have my blessing, dear child," said I, "and if the doctor were here . . . I would give him my blessing too."—"Very well, Mamma," cried Betti, smiling, and ran out of the room.

I was thus left alone with Emmi, and the girl poured her whole heart into her mother's breast. Her story was a funny mixture ; at times most merry, then quite rational, yet everything was connected nevertheless, for everything referred to the doctor.—She had always liked him and he her, but he had not wanted to be made happy by force. "And then we met in the tramcar, and one evening when a gentleman followed me, he took me under his protection. It was Herr Kleines, the wretch ! Dr. Wrenzchen told him I was his *fiancée*, simply to get rid of him ; but he had only said that in an off-hand way. One day, however, we again met accidentally in a tramcar—he looked at me, and put out his hand to me, and I gave him mine. After that we understood each other without saying a word."—"Without a word ?"—"But it was all in earnest, then. And I can't tell you, Mamma, how much I like tramcars, and the doctor likes them above everything too." With a kiss I silenced the little chatterer. And she seemed just made for kissing, as she stood there with beaming eyes, and her bright colour, so young, so happy and full of life, glowing in the first blush of love ! I must say I grudged giving her to the doctor a little, but as they love each other, I am powerless.

Betti returned, and said that she had sent for Dr. Wrenzchen, so that he might get his share of my blessing, but the message sent back was that he would be engaged till nine o'clock with his professional duties, and that after nine he could not go out as his staircase was being painted.—"Why can't he make use of the back stairs ?" I asked. "He hasn't got a second stair-

case in his house, Mamma, comfortable as it otherwise is," was Emmi's answer.—"So you've been to his house, it seems."—"Yes, with Papa and the old Wrenzchens. Oh, they are such dear, delightful people!"

"Without me?" I exclaimed indignantly.

"Yes, Mamma. You always wanted so much to have him as a son-in-law, and so we meant to have presented him to you at Christmas," said Emmi. "Whose was that low idea?" I asked. "It was Dr. Wrenzchen's, of course. Oh Mamma, he is so clever and wise," cried Emmi; "and if you knew how loving he can be——"

"Emmi," I cried sorrowingly, "is your mother nothing to you now, and is this doctor who has broken into the fold—is he everything? Is this all the thanks I get for having borne you, and for bringing you up, for having guarded you like the apple of my eye—and are you all going to prove yourselves cold to me for the sake of that Dr. Wrenzchen? Perhaps it is just as well that the paint on his staircase prevents his coming till tomorrow; who knows but what, if I had him here——"

Emmi laid her arms gently on my shoulder. "Did Grandmamma scold in this way when you were engaged to Papa?" she asked and looked at me with the happiest of smiles. "No—no, child—and I'm not scolding. Only your not letting me take part in your happiness long since—it's that that vexes me."

"And we only meant to give you a treat such as you had never had before—it was out of pure love that we didn't say anything."

The child was right, and so I admitted myself satisfied. When the shop-boy returned I handed him the braces and gave him Carl's measurement. Carl is a head taller than the doctor, so that the length will be right enough if he straps them up high. My Carl did not come home from his district meeting till later.

And I did not show myself altogether amiable towards him of course, for he had to feel that a husband cannot ignore his wife without being the worse for it, Christmas surprises or not, which had come to an end as it was.

I let him sleep on the following morning to his heart's content. But why is he like that ?

The festive season was drawing nearer and nearer. The ginger cakes were there, the fir-trees and with them all the witchery of Christmas-tide. In the newspapers and magazines too, there appeared those short stories for the season which, however, I always skip on principle. Why ? Because they are all so wretchedly sad. It is generally about some one who is ill—either the mother or father or a child—and those that happen to be well, have, in their boundless grief, to look for some happy meeting out of doors, and the conclusion is always the Christmas-tree being lighted and grief at an end. If there were as many wealthy foreigners running about the world as appear in the Christmas novelettes, surely once in a way one would hear among one's friends of a "Christmas uncle" of this kind, doling out happiness to all around him. But as this never happens, I fancy story-tellers make use of this kind of benefactor only as a sort of soothing ointment to lessen the artificial sorrow into which they have thrown the tender-hearted readers by their account of the miserable sick folk. Those who know how much real misery there is in the world, do not need to have imitations presented to them ; they know where it is to be found, and learn also soon enough how to render help. This is my reason for objecting to fictitious Christmas troubles.

I know people who have certainly not much in their purses, and to whom a monied stranger would be very

welcome, yet they manage to get on without him, and are moreover quite content. That I saw plainly at the Weigelts, to whom I paid a visit on Christmas Eve.

In our house the time fixed for the distribution of presents was rather late, as Dr. Wrenzchen could not be with us till ten o'clock ; so I thought I'd go to the Weigelts and help Augusta, who was again without a servant for economy's sake, and had all the household work to do by herself. At seven I called at the fourth floor in the Acker Strasse, and she was delighted at my coming.

Augusta's husband had told her that after leaving his office he meant to go to the Christmas Fair to make his purchases, and he had not yet come in ; so we two had a talk about all sorts of things, and, as Augusta confides everything to me, I soon knew how matters stood with them. It seems they have not yet paid off all their debts ; their first furniture that was got on the hire system was too expensive, and, since the baby's arrival, she can earn but little with her flower-making. If a Christmas uncle were to appear from America and rid them of that furniture-dealer they would get on very well ; but such uncles, as I have already said, exist only on paper.

Yet I can't say that Augusta was in any way down-hearted ; on the contrary, she was happier than I had ever seen her, for there stood her baby's first Christmas-tree, which she had trimmed for him, and she was eagerly awaiting the moment when two bright baby eyes would drink in the glory of the lights. The son and heir, as they call him, was meanwhile lying asleep in his cradle.

"I have got everything ready," said Augusta ; "all I want now is my husband."—"I wonder you have been able to do all this alone," I replied. "The rooms are

so tidy, everything prepared for supper, the presents all laid out, the tree trimmed—how can you have managed it all?”—“Quite simply,” she replied gaily. “I have a magic word, and since I discovered it everything gets done so speedily.”—“And what word’s that?” I asked inquisitively. “*Dalli, dalli,*” she answered laughingly. “It’s really a Polish word, but it is said so easily, and is much more convenient than ‘quick, quick.’ Moreover, it sounds so cheery. When I begin any work I say low to myself, ‘*dalli, dalli* ;’ when I go a-marketing I say again ‘*dalli, dalli,* or baby will be awake before you get home ;’ when I wash up the dishes in the kitchen or am scrubbing the floor, I keep on saying ‘*dalli, dalli,*’ and so get everything done in good time.”

This pleased me very much, and, as I saw that everything was really beautifully neat, I must confess that Augusta is not only “*dalli*” herself, but very thorough in her work too.

When her husband came in he was sent straight to the bedroom and told to take the baby out of its crib and to keep it in good-humour. After a little he called through the door : “We are quite ready to present ourselves,” and the candles on the tree had meanwhile been lit. Then in he came with the boy on his arm, but he stood still at the door. The child was stretching its little hands out towards the light and staring with eyes wide open at the wonderful sight, then it cried “da da,” and Augusta ran up to him and kissed him and kissed her husband too, and he clasped her firmly to him. The little cry of joy from the baby’s babbling lips had made them both so happy. It was truly a blessed evening in the little room on the fourth storey. Then came the surprises. She had presents for her husband, and he several things for her. Each

seemed to have wished for the very things they received, and Augusta was beside herself with delight at a brass mortar—a thing she so greatly required, only it had been too expensive to buy.

Even the few things I brought with me gave great pleasure. I remained till Augusta got the supper ready, and amused myself with the child meanwhile. "He is getting big and strong," said Herr Weigelt, and the boy crowed with delight and pulled his father's hair. I then went home, although Augusta begged me to remain. "Children," said I, "I am sure you would rather be by yourselves to-day."

When I got out into the street the crowds of people were greater than usual. Every one seemed hurrying home, and very many were carrying parcels, some a little fir-tree which had been got cheap at the last moment, others were walking slowly as if they were looking for something—perhaps for a happy Christmas. Were these people alone in the large city and forsaken? Who can say? I did not know them. All of them, however, were passing by the house where the Christmas joys were so bright and pure—joys such as I wished might fall to the lot of every one; and yet what were these joys if looked at closely?—a Jack-a-dandy and a brass mortar!

Our house did not look quite like Christmas when I got home, for they were still waiting for Dr. Wrenzchen. Carl and I had finished all the preparations in the afternoon. Emmi was very restless, but brides always are when their divinity is about to appear. Uncle Fritz then came in. I knew what was going to be done, for the formal betrothal I had always put off, and had arranged with Uncle Fritz that the doctor should be smuggled into the house quietly on Christmas Eve. But, of course, thought I, if he is to be put among the



Christmas gifts, that is my business, and I mean to attend to it. So I went unobserved into the room where the tree stood, and the presents were all laid out, and where Uncle Fritz had secretly let the doctor in. And there he stood like a very burglar! I shook hands with him, and he wished me a good-evening, but he hardly knew how to excuse himself for being found in the room. "Help me to light the tree," said I to him cheerily, and gave him a taper. He was so quick at it that I said jocosely: "You are a born *paterfamilias*." Then he took his seat in an armchair covered with flowers, in front of the table upon which the tree stood, and, as I gazed at him, he really looked splendid—almost as presentable as a church-warden!

Thereupon I opened the door and surprised them with the lighted tree and Dr. Wrenzchen. They had not expected this, and Emmi cried out at once: "There he is!" and flew to him, and we others all rejoiced over the two young people who had plighted their troth, and over whom the Christmas-tree was shedding its light. But the girl's eyes sparkled with something brighter and more brilliant than the light of the candles. It was love. Carl went up to Dr. Wrenzchen, held out his right hand to him, which the doctor took heartily, and said: "This is your first Christmas Eve in our family, which will henceforth be yours too, dear Dr. Wrenzchen. May this kindly festival draw the bond between us closer still. Let us be one in joy and one in sorrow. We now belong to one another."

I was quite upset at hearing my Carl speak like this, but did not allow any one to notice it, and said: "Now, let us see what Father Christmas has brought."—Things of all kinds were discovered. The doctor was delighted with his well-piled-up table. I was, however, annoyed at one present which Uncle Fritz had put upon it with-

out my knowledge—namely, an elegant *skat*-block with the motto—"Who stakes?" Fritz's present to me was a dramatic piece entitled 'Receipt against Mothers-in-law,' which I at once laid aside. Emmi got from him a miniature tramcar, which did not vex her at all. The doctor too had exerted himself, and surprised Emmi with a splendid chain and locket containing his photograph; in fact, I had to take him to task a little for his extravagance; but he replied that the things would, of course, keep their value.

"You could not wish a more reliable son-in-law, Wilhelmine," said Fritz to me in confidence; "for he bets cautiously at *skat*."—"That is unintelligible language to me," I replied; "but what I do know, unfortunately, is that he squanders his money, especially on his birthday *fêtes*."—"Who told you that?"—"You, yourself."—Fritz laughed out aloud.—"The only outlay I know him to make on those anniversaries is to have his hair cut; his friends, however, always talk of his lavish expenditure by way of chaffing him."—"And me, too, I suppose."—"You too," he added, laughing.—But I did not laugh.—"Fritz," said I, "do not do anything of this sort again, if only for Emmi's sake. Think what it would be if she were to lose her respect for her future husband; nothing lowers people so much in the eyes of others as being perpetually chaffed."—"For Heaven's sake don't become sentimental, Wilhelmine, but attend to your duties, and give us a glass of your 'special'—without a round of toasts there can be no lawful engagement."

We toasted away, so to say, reverently. Uncle Fritz, however, did not cease with his joking, and several times looked at his watch, exclaiming: "Doctor, if you want to 'catch a salmon,' you'd better be off!" Dr. Wrenzchen, however, maintained that he couldn't get

away, as his bride was holding him so firmly by the hand.—How nice it sounded to hear him call Emmi his bride!—It is, after all, the greatest reward a mother can have when all her cares, all her love, all her training and the many expenses are crowned by the wedding wreath. If Dr. Wrenzchen loves Emmi truly, with his whole heart, he is sure to give up card-playing, and even the most cautious betting.—I, for my part, shall not cease working towards his improvement.

Carl accused me next morning of having been a little bit screwy.—“Carl,” said I, without a spark of ill-humour, “it was not even jollity; nothing but joy—pure joy!”

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#### EMMI'S TROUSSEAU.

WHEN I was young, brides were content with an outfit; nowadays, however, it must be a trousseau. In reality a trousseau is much the same as what was formerly called an outfit, with this difference, that a trousseau has more fallals about it, and is not nearly as substantial as what a bride used to get: more lace and edgings, and embroidery in the old German patterns, but no durability.

Now I said to myself: “Wilhelmine, you arrange the outfit after the old substantial fashion. The doctor is a well-nourished man and of goodly weight; he can't do with breakable furniture, and if the bedclothes are not of the best, they will be worn out in a couple of years. The chloride of lime eats up the modern rubbish in no time.”

A few days after their formal betrothal, the young people told me that they had made up their minds not to put off their wedding to any very distant day. “Why such hurry?” I asked. “Courting-time is such

a happy time that it would be wrong to shorten it. Does it not give young people leisure for getting to know each other properly? Does it not give the bridegroom the opportunity of proving himself attentive to his bride? And then there are many preparations to make that the new household may look as if things had come fresh from the warehouse." Dr. Wrenzchen, however, declared that he personally objected to any fuss, and that his practice did not leave him time for any superfluous love-making.

"Dear son-in-law," said I in reply, "to make oneself agreeable to a fellow-creature is never superfluous, especially when circumstances draw them into close relationship with each other. I, for my part, claim no further consideration, beyond that which can and ought to be demanded by any mother-in-law who has the welfare of her daughter at heart." To this the doctor replied, that he had great regard for me, and would gladly do as I wished in all reasonable things, but that in all other matters his will would have to be regarded as decisive. That it was his wish also to make Emmi happy, but not according to the prescriptions of other people, and not at the cost of his own personal freedom. I knew, of course, that by "other people," he meant only me, but I controlled myself and said: "Very well, then, let it be as you like, but I will not have the outfit got in too great a hurry. I'm the mother there."

Such hurry I detested, but then everything nowadays goes at galloping speed. Formerly one knew by the coming of crocuses, and lilies of the valley, that it was spring-time; now the poor things are so driven and hurried that they make their appearance at Christmas. Formerly the flowers of the elder-tree did not open their buds till the nightingales had returned; but now-

adays it may be seen in full flower in the shop windows in January. But how different it looks! How scanty and yellow are its leaves, how miserable are its branches, how sickly its blossoms!

It is just the same with these hurried courtships. Formerly when a bride's outfit was to be got ready, there was time to consider things thoroughly and properly. Every article that had to be stitched got its due attention, and one got to know and to love it, because many a thought was sown into it, many a hope and many a joy, such as but once in a life-time fills a human heart—namely when one is a bride. I remember this well enough from my own youth. Oh, what a happy time it was!

Nowadays, however, it seems as if some one were behind driving you on with a whip. The sewing-machine, with its rattling noise, is made to run up the seams; and what does it know about feelings? Accurate its work may be, but it cannot sew any love into the material, which it perforates with diabolical rapidity. For love requires time. After all, therefore, people may be right nowadays in calling a bride's outfit her trousseau.

I set to work, with my daughters, to make Emmi's as far as possible according to the old style. Those who do not know what work and trouble there are in hemming linen, treat these good articles afterwards in a heedless way, and before they know where they are, their finest table-napkins are no better than dusters.

The doctor lives very comfortably, but the house is an old one, and he hasn't got a sufficient number of rooms. He needs a waiting-room and a consulting-room for professional purposes alone. Where then was the best room to be? This naturally led to disputes between us. He considered that when he was

not using his consulting-room, his wife could make herself as comfortable as she liked, either in the consulting-room or in his study. That is a very pretty supposition, thought I, and maintained that it would be necessary for him to rent the upper floor as well. His reply was that he had absolutely no wish to work himself to death for the landlord. The upper floor was not likely to run away, and could be had at some future day.—“But what about the best sitting-room?” cried I in dismay.—“What,” he asked, “do we want with a room to show off a lot of furniture? Show-rooms that are used but once in a year on festive occasions are a stupid piece of luxury for the middle classes. The family pokes about in back rooms to make place for a furniture shop in front, that exists only to make work for scrubbing and cleaning. I’m not going to join in any such tom-foolery.”—“If you mean to turn the world upside down, I suppose we shall have to submit,” I replied sharply; but I did not urge him further, as the civil court had not yet uttered its final word. I quietly promised myself, however, to have my own way when once the doctor had been firmly tied. There is so much uncertainty about engagements nowadays, that one cannot breathe freely till the civil court and the Church have done their part. I am for both, as things are made doubly secure.

Nor would the doctor listen to my proposal that he should move to another house. “My patients know where to find me,” he said, “and, believe me, it is very difficult for a young medical man to get a practice in Berlin; there are close upon fifteen hundred doctors in the town.”—“That’s positively frightening,” I exclaimed. “How can they all expect to exist? Is there enough ill-health for them all to make a living out of it? Berlin, truly, is enough to make one’s hair stand

on end." When I heard what competition there was, I no longer dreamt of persuading him to change his abode. One need thank God for allowing people to get ill ; and if Heaven shows an interest in the doctors and provides for the sick folk, it would be downright wicked for others to make it difficult for patients to find the doctors.

Still, newly furnished the house would have to be, orderly though it is ; for, however nice a bachelor may have had his abode, it's a very different thing when a wife comes into the house. "Dear doctor," said I one day, "the furnishing will be our business, simple but substantial ; or do you like the modern fashionable style of things better ? He replied that the stylish furniture seemed made more for being looked at than for use, but that he should like the dining-room after the present fashion, although otherwise he certainly preferred the comfort of the old style. And as regards bedsteads he liked genuine carpenter's work to all the new-fangled substitutes. "You may make your mind easy about them," I replied, "the beds shall be an abode in themselves. I shall have them made expressly, for, to my mind, ready-made things are not to be depended upon. I remember a brand-new bedstead breaking down with me once when we had a trip out to Biesenthal and we remained there overnight." He expressed his regret that this should ever have happened to me, and added that he anticipated the best possible arrangement in all the household matters from one so experienced as myself, more especially as regards the kitchen utensils, of which he had no knowledge whatever.

"But where shall the sideboard be placed ?" said I, when we were looking over his rooms with a view to the new furnishing. "I think if we were to move that

bookcase up to the loft we should obtain a suitable place."—"My books I cannot part with," he exclaimed. I took out one of the old volumes just to show him how much space they ran away with, and in doing so opened the book. "Doctor," I cried out, when sufficiently recovered from my horror, "what do you want books for with pictures of human beings with their skins stripped off? As far as I know no doctor ever strips the skin off people, and you have long since passed your examinations. Why need such hideous books be in the room where Emmi will be when you are out? Think what it would be if the child were accidentally to get this book into her hands. It might be the death of her. Those medical books must go up to the loft." He maintained that Emmi would soon get accustomed to the books. "Never!" said I. He was annoyed at this, and answered sharply: "I know better; the books I require, and they shall remain where they are!"—"As you like," said I, and took up my bonnet and shawl. "A pretty serpent I have taken to my bosom," thought I to myself. "But patience, my good doctor. No best room, and all those abominable books about, it would indeed be too delightful!"

And there at home sat Emmi, radiant with joy, sewing at her trousseau. "If only you knew what is awaiting you, you poor child," sighed I to myself. "But be not troubled; you have a mother who will protect her young like a lioness. As soon as the time comes, I know where the books will be put!"

I helped Emmi, for there was still a great deal to do. "Mamma," she said, "I have never enjoyed any work in my life as much as this heavenly trousseau!"



## THE LAST COFFEE-PARTY.

WHEN I was a little girl we had of course been taught at school about Moloch ; but in those innocent days, when I was only between six and seven years old, naturally I could not imagine the feelings of those mothers who had to place their little darlings as sacrifices into the red-hot arms of the coke-heated monster, great as were the efforts our master made to arouse our horror of the false gods. Now, however, as the day draws nearer upon which I—the passive mother of the bride—shall have to hand over my sweet Emmi to the doctor, I begin to understand about Moloch. A bridegroom does indeed always promise to cherish his intended, and to take her future into his hands ; but what sort of hands are they?—Moloch's claws !

The state of affairs seemed to demand greater sacrifices day by day. Not only do the preparations for the wedding point with terrible unalterability to the moment of parting, of which everything seems to remind one—the outfit, the running about from shop to shop, the furnishing of the doctor's rooms, and above all the bride's dress—but even the leave-taking from the harmless pleasures of a girl's existence now gently passing away, awaken in one the mournful thought : “ Things will be different, but who can tell how they will be ? ”

One day lately we had our last reading at the Police-lieutenant's house. These evenings have been so enjoyable, and especially improving to the mind, for when we were all sitting round the large table reading a classic piece, each taking a part, we always felt the grandeur of our poets, more so even than when we had

seen the pieces played on the stage ; for it will be found that critics are unanimously agreed in thinking that actors are never sufficiently imbued with the spirit of classicism. Of course gentlemen had been quite excluded from these meetings ; had they been admitted other interests would immediately have arisen, and the whole thing would probably have ended in an impromptu dance. Without gentlemen, on the other hand, one feels the influence of the author's genius, and culture flows in an undiluted stream into the youthful minds. We elderly ladies took the lovers' parts by way of precaution, and every one thought that I read the part of Louise Millerin from *Cabale und Liebe* admirably. The Police-lieutenant's wife read Ferdinand's part very well ; we omitted Lady Milfort's part, as Schiller seems to have paid but little heed to reading-parties when dealing with that person.

When we had got through with our classics, we had a nice little bit of supper, and took leave of one another conscious of having spent an enjoyable evening in every respect. We had, indeed, arranged that the suppers were to be very simple, as the mental food was the main thing, the material part being but a secondary matter. Yet, as the readings were held, turn about, at different houses, the one family always wanted to have things better than the others, so that at the end of the season, when the last evening came there was sometimes an unnecessary amount on the table. At the Police-lieutenant's we had even two sweet dishes.

"You are acting contrary to our original plan, my dear," I remarked to the Police-lieutenant's wife, when I saw how much trouble she had taken.—To this she replied : "It is the last reading your Emmi will take part in, and I only wanted to show her how fond we are of her, and she loves chocolate pudding with

cream!"—"You hear, Emmi," I said, "how kindly the Police-lieutenant's wife has acted towards you. Have you thanked her for having made that excellent pudding specially for you?"—Emmi was quite touched and replied that the Police-lieutenant's wife had always been extremely kind to her; that she did not at all know how she could ever make her any proper return.—"Keep us in loving remembrance," was her reply; "your new surroundings will be only too likely separate you from your old friends."—How right she was!

Two of the young ladies now rose and fetched something from the next room, rolled up in tissue paper, and placed it on the table with much solemnity. The elder of the two—Amanda Kulecke, the girl that Uncle Fritz used to rave about—then made a short speech in which she said that games and dancing would soon come to an end for Emmi. But whatever shape the future might take, however much of joy or sorrow might be concealed in its horn of plenty, the realm of the ideal would now be revealed to her, a realm which Schiller had opened up to her and which had become so wholly her own at these evening readings. In remembrance of the hours that had been dedicated to these higher thoughts, her friends now wished to offer Emmi a small parting gift. With these words the tissue paper was removed, and there stood a pretty little bust of Schiller, with a touch of verdigris about his hair, standing on a black pedestal, on the one side of which was attached a thermometer; the gift therefore might stand on a writing-desk and be of practical use as well. Amanda wound up her little speech with the words: "*Es prüfe was sich ewig bindet*" (Prove ye each other well, who would be joined for aye), and then flew into Emmi's arms and kissed her. All the others too

came and kissed her amid tears, and Emmi herself was quite overcome.

Scenes like this had been recurring constantly latterly, not only at the reading-parties, but also at their Holbein Society, where the girls met to do embroidery in the Old German style, also at their Saturday Meetings for English Conversation, and the many other little undertakings the girls pursued for improving themselves in things of which we older people never dreamt in our young days.

There were also the farewell visits to acquaintances which invariably ended somewhat dolefully; the child, therefore, seems more and more to make the impression of being a sacrifice, bidding farewell to her old companions and being petted and pitied by them. All this would shake the best of nerves a little.

It was but natural that we should want to have our revenge, for one doesn't dine or sup with other people without giving them something in return. So I said to Emmi: "Let all of your friends be invited to a splendid coffee-party, it will be the last one I shall give in your honour." She asked if Dr. Wrenzchen might be asked also.—"That would be a pretty thing," I exclaimed, "one gentleman cannot surely be asked to join a ladies' coffee-party!"—She said that if the doctor couldn't be asked, she didn't care a bit to have a party. She said it would have been so nice to show him to her friends, and it could quite well be done, if the brothers and their friends were allowed to come and fetch their sisters home.—"But supposing some have no brothers, like Amanda Kulecke?" said I.—"Then we will get Uncle Fritz to bring Herr Kleines, and he can accompany Amanda home, as far as the Bülow Strasse."—"Do you not remember what sort of man that Herr Kleines is?"—"Amanda would keep him in order if

he ventured any familiarities with her ; she is tremendously sharp and outspoken."

"That's true enough ; if she weren't so opinionative, Uncle Fritz might perhaps have wheedled his way in there, and you might be calling her aunt."

There was no help for it, I had to give in. The child's last coffee could not be allowed to cast a shadow upon the few days left for her in her parents' house. No ; that I hadn't the heart to do.

In my time it was the custom for the bride's friends to come shortly before the wedding-day and to help in sewing the wedding-dress. Every one put in a few stitches at the hem, or wherever else anything remained to be done. This they did to show their affection, and I think the old custom a very nice one, for there clings to the dress, afterwards, the thought that friends helped to make it, and it is also the last loving service rendered by the companions of the circle she is about to leave ; yet the good old custom does certainly most painfully remind one of the preparation for the sacrifice.

When I expressed these views of mine to Carl, he found fault with me and said, I rummaged too much about in my feelings ; that my duty was to see that the little festival went off cheerfully.—But a father is never a mother, and what can he know of Moloch ?

I must admit that on the afternoon when all the young girls had assembled, the sight was an exceedingly pretty one. Chairs had been placed in a semi-circle in the middle of the room, facing the window, and there sat all those who were at the moment engaged with the wedding-dress, which in its snowy whiteness lay in their midst like a soft cloud. The other girls were sitting about just as they pleased and busy with some kind of handiwork, and were chatting away merrily to their hearts' content. I went about among them

with the coffee-pot and cake-plate. How pleasant a sight it is to see such blooming young creatures in loving companionship with one another ! One feels as if one were walking in a shady wood in spring-time, with the sun shining upon the tender young leaves, and little birds twittering and singing in and out among the branches. I forgot altogether that I had reached a sedater age, and found myself joining in the girls' fun, and joking and laughing as if I had been one of them myself. And how affectionate they were to Emmi ! One of them always had her arm round her waist, sometimes even two at a time were doing this, and kept kissing and looking up at her as though they had been her sisters. "Just like turtle-doves," said I to myself ; "and down into this charming dovecot swoop the hawks and disturb its peace !"

The doctor had, it is true, sent a beautiful almond cake for "those who worked at the bride's dress ;" but my eyes are not to be blinded by cakes ; I see beyond, and know well enough that he is an egoist, otherwise he would not oppose me in so many things that I consider indispensable for my child's welfare. He won't even take a wedding-trip, because, as he says, his patients cannot be left. Rubbish !

When the dress was finished it had, of course, to be tried on. Nay, but how bewitching Emmi did look as she came into the room, conscious of looking well, and beaming with joyful excitement ; it surpassed all conception, and could, at most, be painted ! None of the girls ventured to go very near her, but gazed at her in silent admiration from a distance. Betti alone clasped her in her arms and bent her head mournfully upon her sister's cheek.

Could she be thinking of Emil Bergfeldt ? I hardly liked to ask myself the question ; but if any of that

family had come within my reach at the moment, something would assuredly have happened.

Betti has strength of character, and raising her head, said to the other young girls : "Does not my darling sister look sweet ?" The others then began to praise the dress and to declare it angelic. However, it was not the dress that made the angelic impression, it was Emmi's own self. She was as beautiful as all the rest put together, and even a little lovelier still !

Just as twilight was setting in, the doctor came. Emmi, who had long since taken off her wedding-dress, looked radiantly happy as they walked arm-in-arm from one group of her friends to another, and I must say the doctor stood the ordeal of being subjected to the critical gaze of a number of girls very well ; still it was easy to see that they had nothing to find fault with in him. Amanda Kulecke, however, said aloud, that a doctor would not be her choice, for when patients sent for him he would have to be off, and it was half stuff and nonsense.

My answer to this remark of hers was that to help suffering people was a very noble profession, and in any case better than poisoning people. That was one for her—for the Kuleckes are distillers.

Later in the evening Uncle Fritz, Herr Kleines and a number of young men came, related to the girls either as brothers or cousins. Games were played till supper was ready, and the doctor had to pay most forfeits as he was always engrossed with Emmi and not paying attention to the game. How delighted we all were when he was called upon to do extraordinary things to redeem his forfeits, and how hot he got when he had "to fall into the well," and to be on his knees till Emmi released him ! It was too funny. Herr Kleines, who was for ever proposing something with

kissing was, at last, not asked again. He really seems, sometimes, not to know where he is—amusing as he can be at other times.

After supper the dancing began. Uncle Fritz had sent us crackers with costumes in tissue paper, and contrived that Dr. Wrenzchen got a hat the shape of a huge slipper,\* at which even Carl was greatly amused. The doctor enjoyed the joke himself, but said it was only external. I fear, however, he will not give in to her much; and, when he has made the girl unhappy, will again merely declare that it's—only external!

When the young people were about to take their leave Herr Kleines was asked to accompany Fräulein Kulecke as far as the Bülow Strasse, a pretty long distance. He looked rather put out; however, she exclaimed: "Come along, I'll see that no one does you any harm." She is at least two heads taller than Herr Kleines.

When all had gone, and my daughters had retired to bed, Carl, Uncle Fritz and I remained up a little while. Carl declared he liked the doctor better every day, and that he had been specially pleased to see him to-day joining so merrily in the innocent mirth of the party of young girls. "He and innocent mirth!" I exclaimed.—"I can't comprehend your aversion to the doctor, Wilhelmine," said Uncle Fritz; "you used in every possible way to try and catch him."—"Because I didn't know what he was," I replied. "Wait till the Moloch is heated and then see!"—"I don't understand you, Wilhelmine—you are quite foolish," said my Carl. "I foolish! Not I. But neither of you care a bit whether I am made a sacrifice as well as Emmi. Not

\* *Den Mann unter dem Pantoffel haben* (To have a husband under one's slipper) is the German proverbial expression for a wife having the upper-hand.



till I'm buried in my grave will you discover what I have been to you. You will see then that that Dr. Wrenzchen will rub his eyes externally with onions and internally rejoice that I'm gone. But good-night. You'll both see soon enough what will be the end of it all."

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#### AT THE "BOCK."\*

You may be right in informing me that, with the intention of writing about life in Berlin, I should confine myself more to speaking of the metropolis itself than to giving an account of my own family affairs, as it is comparatively of little importance what occurs in the Landsberger Strasse, and especially within the four walls of the Buchholzes' house. Still, I am right, too, in maintaining that many things in your paper are perfectly unintelligible to the delicately strung mind of a lady—as, for instance, the reports of the Stock Exchange. We ladies know only of one rise and one fall: in our youth the change between glowing love and cooling sulks; at a more sensible age, wrath and reconciliation. And what would life be without this little variety?—a clock without a pendulum.

By the above remarks I only mean to point out that everything has its justification, with the exception, of course, of unpleasantness and annoyance; for, when an account is given of a subscription ball, only that which is beautiful is described: the dark eyes, the fascinating charms, how a dress was draped and what it looked like—whether of a salmon colour or gold brown—the style in which the lady's hair was worn, and her jewelry. But nothing whatever is mentioned

\* A *café chantant* in the east end of Berlin.

about the blackening of the eyebrows at home, of the soapy water in the hand-basin, of the hair left in the comb, of the debts owing to Gerson, and the scoldings the lady's-maid got while helping her mistress dress.

As far as is in my power I will, therefore, comply with your request and keep to the metropolis, and write you a letter, not as a wife and mother, but as an authoress who will stick at nothing. By doing this you will understand how it was that I came to be at the Bock.

When I first got your letter I felt as if I had dropped from the clouds, and said to my husband : " Carl, literature has got its difficulties, for how in all the world am I to write about the metropolis ? The City Railway, the new wall round the Botanic Gardens, the electric light in the Leipziger Strasse—all this is pretty new and actual, as people say. But what do I know about them ?"—My Carl helped me in thinking the matter over, and, after a short silence, asked : " What do you say to the granite basin in front of the Museum ?"—" Carl," said I, " that basin is a thing of ages past ?"—" Or of the monument to old King Fritz ?"—" I will think it over," said I ; and I thought and thought the whole day long. I walked out to Unter den Linden and took a look at the statue through my opera-glass, but had to confess to Carl on my return that I could see nothing in " old Fritz," and did not know what to write about him. " You can't think how fearfully difficult the metropolis is, Carl," said I ; " my brain aches as if it had overtired itself."—" Why do you worry yourself about it, then, Wilhelmine ?" asked my husband kindly. " There is no need for you to write about the metropolis."—" Is that what you think ?" I exclaimed. " What would the editor think of me ? Am I to give them the opportunity of saying again that we ladies

may have talent, but have no ability? No, no! I know what I owe to myself and to my sex. To-morrow I shall go again and look about me."

In the evening Uncle Fritz came in. "Is anything the matter?" he asked when he found me and my Carl rather monosyllabic.—"She wants to write an article and hasn't got a subject," said Carl.

"That is capital!" exclaimed Uncle Fritz.

"What is capital?" said I haughtily. "What do you mean by that, Fritz? Do you mean to insult your own sister? I beg you at once to tell me what you mean by capital."—"Come, come, Wilhelm!" said Uncle Fritz, laughing (he often calls me Wilhelm still, as he did when we were children and played at soldiers together). "I only mean that as you have no writing to do we could all go out to the Bock together. That's what I meant by saying it's capital."—"Do you fancy I will take any such lame excuse?"—"Wilhelmine," put in Carl, "the Bock is a part of the metropolis, even though one of its far-off corners."—"To the Bock I won't go," said I.—"The Krauses are going," added Uncle Fritz.—"He or she?" I asked.—"Both of them. They've got a visitor staying with them, who wants to see Berlin."—"A visitor! A man or woman?"—"A woman."—"Old or young?"—"Young, of course, Wilhelmine!"—Aha, thought I, I see the trap now. If Fritz calls me Wilhelm, he wants me to go as a favour, and there's more kept hidden from me; but I merely said out aloud: "Well, Carl dearest, you may be right; the Bock might prove something for my pen, and if Frau Krause is going I may surely venture to go too."

It was arranged that Fritz should come and fetch us the following evening about five o'clock, and we then retired early. I did not find it easy to go to sleep, for the Krauses' visitor lay like a nightmare upon me. Who

could the Krauses have staying with them? And Uncle Fritz is quite capable of throwing himself away.

Next evening we went off to the Bock, and Uncle Fritz in a very generous way took tickets for all three. It's a mercy I'm not nervous. Picture to yourself two large halls exactly of the same size, and we three standing where the two ends meet forming a corner, one hall being on our left, the other on our right. The atmosphere was blue with tobacco smoke. Above, there are a number of chandeliers; below, a mass of people; above, therefore, all is bright, midway down greyish-blue, and below black. From both halls the unsuspecting visitor is met by such a din that he hardly knows whether he is on his head or heels. The noise, moreover, is as great as two brass bands and an uproarious crowd of people can make it. Some are singing, some knocking and thumping their walking-sticks on the tables, some are yelling, but not a creature is quiet. And thousands are doing this! It seemed to me as if hell had broken loose. "Oh, my gracious goodness," thought I, "If I were only out of this!"

We had, however, to look for the Krauses. Uncle Fritz spied them out in no time, although otherwise he does not much care about Frau Krause. Then we threaded our way to their table; but, on our way to them, a dressed-up hussy roared at me: "Where is Nauke?"\* and danced a doll up and down close to my face. The dolls which they call Nauke are hawked about by boys. I was enraged at this, but did not dare say anything; I had, in fact, to put on as pleasant a look as I could, for at the Bock nothing is taken

\* A local jest, said to have originated on some occasion when a woman lost sight of her husband in a public place, and in hunting for him kept on calling out: "Where's Nauke?"

amiss, all goes on in a brotherly and sisterly kind of way. My goodness, the things I saw there!

Fortunately, just as we took our seats, the music in our hall stopped, and we could exchange greetings; but the murderous noise in the other continued. The Krauses' visitor was with them, and was introduced to me as Fräulein Erica Lünne, from Lingen on the Ems. My first impression was: not bad. My second: a little countrified, but neat, very neat. The main point, however, was, is she well off or not? As far as I know, the Lünnes are relations of hers—Frau Krause—and what she brought her husband wasn't much; and I was determined that the girl Fritz married should have about as much as Fritz himself, for, of course, one can live brilliantly in Lingen upon what would not go any length in Berlin.

What annoyed me specially was the cajoling way in which Frau Krause went on with Fritz. I noticed at once what she was driving at, and that she considered the thing a settled affair already. Would she otherwise have kept on saying: "Now, Erica, and how do you like Berlin? I fancy you wouldn't mind remaining in the capital if any one were to chain you here!" And what business had she to poke Fritz in that way?

I was on the point of remarking that Uncle Fritz would not make his choice without my consent, when the band struck up the Bock Valse. Then, for the first time in my life, I learnt what a regular row meant. The people yelled and shrieked, they stamped, and rapped and howled, but always in time to the music. Some even danced, or pretended to—the ladies in their bright-coloured paper caps, the gentlemen in crush hats.

Fräulein Erica did not say a word, but looked terrified at the surging crowd; neither did she drink any of

the beer that had been put before her. Uncle Fritz looked at her stealthily from time to time, but otherwise acted as if indifferent to her presence. But one needs to know him!

Later, when he proposed to my Carl to have a walk round to see if any of their acquaintances happened to be there, I noticed that she followed him with her eyes, and that, all of a sudden, she looked quite agitated. I turned round to see what was the matter, and saw that some ladies with paper caps were not only catching hold of Uncle Fritz in a very familiar kind of way, but began doing the same to my Carl.—I sprang up and hurried to them, when the ladies danced their dolls in front of me, calling out jeeringly: "Where's Nauke?"

"Carl, let us go away," said I.—"Carl shall stay here! Carl, you're too nice!" trolled out the ladies.—I tore the Nauke out of the hand of one of them, for I was so excited I no longer knew what I was doing, and the noise was getting worse than ever.—What happened I don't exactly know. The only thing I do remember is that Carl took my part, and that the whole crowd seemed to be slowly moving onwards, and that at last we got outside into the cool air. What a mercy it was that Carl had put on his old top hat—it would have been a pity for his new one to have got spoilt.

"Where is Fritz?" I cried in anger; "it was he who enticed us here." Uncle Fritz appeared. In place of excusing himself, he began reproaching me by saying: "Those that go to the Bock must do as it does."—"Any woman who touches my Carl, has to deal with me!" I cried.—He called me childish.—"Very well, then, I'd rather be childish than accustom myself to the tone that prevails there. Your sweetheart has been taken to the Bock to improve her mind, I suppose?"

Never have I seen Fritz look as angry as he did when

I said that ; but he replied calmly : " I had thought you would have taken the Krauses' visitor a little under your care, as they were senseless enough to take her to such a place. You knew what I wanted. But instead of doing this you have acted as unreasonably as ever." —"What do I care about your love-affairs?" said I angrily. "This much I will tell you, however, that Bock girl of yours shan't cross my threshold!"—I noticed how Fritz clenched his fists and ground his teeth, yet he said nothing, but turned round abruptly and went back into the hall. My Carl too did not speak at all on our way home.

I felt as if I had fallen through some trap-door, so quickly had the whole affair taken place. And yet I do believe that, while Carl and I were making our way out of the hall, I saw Herr Felix among the crowd—that gentleman who saved the boy's life at Tegel—and by his side was a lady with a red paper cap on her head.

Now was this my imagination, or had it really been Herr Felix ?

I asked Carl whether he had noticed him. Where-upon he replied : " Let young folks go their own way. What business is it of yours ?"

" So it was him ?" I said again.

" I can't and don't mean to swear either way," was Carl's reply.

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### A WEDDING.

Why did you not come to the wedding of my youngest daughter with Dr. Wrenzchen ? Perhaps on account of some small literary law-suit ; or had you some other invitation ? Perhaps you do not care about weddings ? It is a pity you were not there, however, for I am con-

vinced you would have been pleased, although, for my own part, I hadn't much pleasure out of it, for a bride's mother, in fact, can never be pleased. She may smile and look uncommonly happy in her new Bordeaux silk with real lace, she may even declare that she is quite content ; but inwardly she has her thorns and thistles.

And what a trouble it is before one gets all ready ! First there's the re-furnishing of the house for the young couple. There would be absolutely no difficulty about such a thing, if only the doctor would be agreeable, and allow a careful mother-in-law her way, when he knows she is sure to act for his good. But when he proves obstinate, and is for ever putting in his word, and objecting to the most necessary articles, simply because he fancies that a dining-table for twenty-four persons is a luxury, and that there is no space for a lady's writing-desk—then, naturally, there is vexation about every article. I do admit that Dr. Wrenzchen's rooms are now a little closely packed with the new furniture, but then he ought to think of the rooms he will have to have later ; but this—just to spite me—he won't do. And no best room ! I never heard of such a thing !

The largest room he insists upon having made the bedroom, for hygienic reasons. That is again a new-fangled piece of nonsense ! We have all grown up without hygiene.

I had to give in to him, of course, but still could not refrain from saying : " Dear doctor, I can only wish that you may be happy with your new-fashioned notions. As regards my daughter, she knows that her parents' old-fashioned house will always be open to her, even after eleven o'clock at night."

He muttered something at this that I couldn't understand. It's a blessing, I believe, that he did no more than mutter, for patience is a barrel with but a very



thin bottom. I had also hoped that he might still decide to take a wedding-trip ; but, when I gave him to understand that even cooks, when they got married, went at least as far as Bernau or Biesenthal, he would promise nothing, and maintained that his practice would not allow of his making any trip, for he had one patient seriously ill whom he could not leave, and whom it was a matter of pride with him to bring round. To this also I had to give in, but did so somewhat snappishly.

Then there were the invitations to the wedding to send out. Who was to be asked and who not ? He has his own circle of friends, and we ours. If my Carl had not made the sensible remark, " Let us rather send out a few invitations too many, than give people offence," I believe we should still be deliberating about one person and another ; so his eleven medical friends were allowed to pass. One needs dancing men, to be sure.

The Krauses were, of course, also invited. She—Frau Krause—came the next day to ask whether she might bring little Eduard with her. The child, she said, had never seen a wedding, and was looking forward to it. My answer was : " My dear, we have only calculated upon having grown-up people, and cannot set up a musician's table for the sake of one child."

She took this in bad part, it is true ; but knowing, from the days we spent at Tegel together, what a brat the child is, I cannot tolerate the young scamp, and therefore did not mind her making a face about it ( Sniff, that boy had so tormented that it had to be put in the frying-pan to give it a pleasanter existence ). However, I gave her permission to bring Fräulein Erica from Lingen on the Ems, although perfectly aware of her designs upon Uncle Fritz.

I had a serious talk with Fritz beforehand, and said :

“It is quite impossible for us, in any way, to become connected with the Krauses, for a doctor is about to enter our family ; so, remember, ‘that wild flow’ret is not for thee.’” Fritz replied: “Have no fear, Wilhelmine ; and as soon as the first princess passes through Berlin I will make her an offer, and hope you’ll find her good enough for you !” This answer was quite sufficient for me ; for when he gets impertinent that’s a sure sign he means to do the opposite of what I consider right.

It was exactly what I wished, therefore, when Dr. Wrenzchen told me that he had no wish whatever to have the customary gathering on the evening before the wedding, for Frau Krause would certainly have made use of the occasion to put that “wild flower,” arrayed in all her charms, before Uncle Fritz’s eyes. She might even have arranged for them to act something together—she an Ems nymph, and he a Spree mer-man—and Herr Kleines was quite capable of composing some verses for the occasion. Fortunately all this came to nothing.

It was no wonder that I suffered so much from all these worries that Carl said he wished the wedding were over, that I might recover my usual state of mind.

The wedding morning came at last ; to many, very many, it was an ordinary work day, to me a day of anguish, and to my child a day of joy. Emmi was all happiness. When she came to bid me good-morning, and threw her arms round me, and kissed and kissed me, her eyes beaming with a blissful look of faith—as if the future were to be one long day of brightness and light, and the way along which she was to wander with Dr. Wrenzchen a smooth, soft pathway, from which busy little angels had swept away every discomfort—then even I too, for a moment, thought it could not be

otherwise than well for her. But such thoughts are mere hopes—powdered sugar to the rhubarb of human life.

At one o'clock Dr. Wrenzchen came with his friend Dr. Paber, who was to be one of the witnesses, and fetched Emmi to go to the Registrar's office. My Carl and Uncle Fritz were to act as witnesses also, and accompanied the others. I did not go, as I had important matters to attend to.

Was the child to enter her new life without any poetic accompaniment whatever? No! there must be some compensation to her for the wedding-trip which had to be given up; and this I meant to accomplish by secretly decorating Dr. Wrenzchen's house with flowers. The happy thought had originated with Augusta Weigelt, and the good creature helped me in decorating the house, while Emmi was being legally conveyed to the doctor by the heartless officials of the State. Round the banisters and doorways we wound wreaths of green. The sitting-room we turned into a regular flower-garden, and their bedroom became a perfect palm-house. It all looked wonderfully beautiful, and Augusta declared she had never seen anything so exquisite in all her life. The counterpanes looked as fresh and bright as newly fallen snow, and literally shone through the green plants that we had raised in the form of a pyramid in front of the beds.—“When the lamp is lit the effect will be like something out of the ‘Arabian Nights’!” said I.

“Just like fairy-land,” Augusta declared, “if only the pots hadn't the musty smell of a hot-house.”

“I tell you what, Augusta,” I cried, “run quickly round to the perfume shop, and fetch me a bottle of essence of orange-blossom, we will sprinkle the plants with it, and when the two enter the room they will

fancy themselves in Nice. I remember well, in Italy, how enchanting the scent of the orange-blossoms was."

The idea pleased Augusta immensely ; I gave her money, and off she ran.

While she was away I looked carefully round to see that nothing was wanting about the house. It was a perfect doll's house, everything looked so exceedingly trim and neat. There was even a brand-new boot-jack ; I had asked Uncle Fritz to get it.

Augusta had hurried, and we now quickly sprinkled the essence about, and then left. For there was to be a simple luncheon at our house, as the ceremony was not to take place till four o'clock, and the marriage feast was to be held in the *Englisches Haus* at five.

When we got back the gentlemen had already returned and were hungry. Dr. Paber addressed a few friendly words to me, and offered his congratulations, which I accepted the more formally as Uncle Fritz was constantly addressing Emmi as "Frau Doctorin" and treating the whole affair in a very off-hand fashion. Emmi was not a shade different from what she usually was when the doctor was with us, and yet she was already married. Dr. Wrenzchen was a little quiet, and that pleased me. For once surely he must think of the responsibility he is taking upon himself, in having asked other people for their daughter as his wife.

The luncheon went off very pleasantly. Dr. Paber proposed the welcome toast of health and happiness to the young couple, in which we all heartily joined, and then conversed till it was time to dress.

Meanwhile all sorts of wedding presents had been coming in : a number of useful things, and also many that were useless ; for instance, two champagne-coolers, as Dr. Wrenzchen rather objects to buying his champagne ; the eleven doctors gave two very handsome

silver candlesticks ; Herr Kleines' present was a glass globe with gold fish, which, I know, Emmi cannot bear. Uncle Fritz advised her to cook the fish green, and to use the bowl for bottling plums. The Police-lieutenant's wife sent a magnificent bridal bouquet of myrtle and orange-blossoms, just as the couple were starting off in the bride's carriage.

How charming the two looked in the elegant equipage ! Emmi, in her white dress and gauzy veil, and the green wreath in her golden fair hair, looked as lovely as only a bride can look on her wedding-day ; and the doctor so spruce and neat, brand-new from top to toe, looked as solemn as a newly-bound hymn-book. There was really nothing to find fault with in him, everything sat well upon him.

Then the bridesmaids and their bouquets, and the many other ladies in elegant toilettes, and the gentlemen all in ball-costume—it was a silent splendour ! I had never imagined that the scene would be as gorgeous. All the Landsberger Strasse had their heads out of the windows when we drove off to church.

When the two were standing at the altar I felt greatly affected. For a mother, after all, thinks of the future. Would Dr. Wrenzchen always be as good to Emmi as my Carl had been to me ? And what if they did not agree, and happiness forsook them ? What then ? What then ?

The same clergyman who had confirmed Emmi was now officiating at her marriage. He addressed the two somewhat thus : Love has no ending ; it is like the sun which rises clear and bright, and pursues its course unerringly ; and even though clouds may at times arise to obscure it, it will burst forth again triumphantly, and pass away in the evening amid a gentle glow. So it is with human love. And more glorious

still is Divine love, which never changes, never perishes, even though, amid trouble and earthly cares, we might suppose it had vanished. Yet if we have firm faith in it, the comfort of hope will never forsake us, and grief and sorrow will have to yield to undying love. He then spoke of a doctor's profession, which would often call the husband away from his wife's side, and reminded her that this must not vex her, but that she should bless him on his way, as he had to visit sick and suffering fellow-creatures. And to the husband he said, that love could accept no reward but love in return, that he should love and cherish her who had trusted him with her whole heart, and had left father and mother to follow him.

When their rings were being exchanged and the clergyman joined their hands, the sun streamed in sideways through the window and threw its golden light upon the two young people. The organ rolled forth its rich tones through the large body of the church, as if rejoicing in their happiness and joy. I too felt in some measure comforted, and thought: "The good God will watch over them; and in other things, *Wilhelmine*, you will yourself see that all's as it should be."

The congratulating then began; and what a lot of kissing and shaking of hands there was, amid sunshine and music from the organ!

When we were about to drive back, *Emmi* came up to me and whispered: "Mamma, please take my bouquet and let me have yours."—"Why, *Emmi*?"—"Mine is almost all orange-blossoms."—"Yes; but . . ."—"Don't you remember that *Franz* cannot bear the smell; it gives him headache?"

I stood there like one petrified, long after they had driven off. "Good heavens," thought I, "and we have

sprinkled all those plants with essence of orange-blossoms!"—"Augusta," I cried, "Augusta, we must go and air the room!"

How I got to the *Englisches Haus*, where the wedding feast was to be, I don't remember. I was for ever, in imagination, throwing open the windows in Dr. Wrenzchen's house; my mind refused to soar beyond this. At last we were all seated round the table eating and drinking. Everyone seemed to enjoy what was set before them, and as the day was pretty warm the repast was washed down freely and merrily, as became the festive occasion. I was the only one who could not join in the general merriment, and took but little of the many dishes that went round, and did this only to see what the people had provided for us. To eat much was out of the question.

I had an excellent place. Old Herr Wrenzchen took me in to dinner, and my Carl took Franz's mother. She is a gentle kindly soul, and thinks no end of him. She told me many things about his boyhood—how he had worked his way quickly through the Gymnasium, and had always brought home the best testimonials, and that later at the University he had been steady and industrious, yet was of a cheerful and frank disposition. All this I was most glad to hear, but could not help thinking to myself, Of what use in married life are the best testimonials from school, and the most praiseworthy steadiness at the University? Things are often very different later.

Emmi and the doctor looked charming side by side behind the large bouquets which had been placed on the table in their honour; but whenever I looked at the flowers they seemed to strike me to the heart, for they reminded me of the essence of orange-blossom I had sprinkled about the bedroom. Augusta—the good

soul!—assured me, it is true, that all the windows had been opened as wide as possible, and that the smell had almost vanished already, still I could not rid myself of an inward feeling of uneasiness. It had, indeed, occurred to me to get the gardener to remove all the green, but that couldn't be.—What would the neighbours have thought of such doings? The plants had been hired for a week, and I had settled the amount in advance.

The table really looked perfectly delightful. First of all, there were the eleven doctors whose superior culture might be recognised even at a distance; between them, alternately, was a young, or at least, a youngish lady; then there was also the Police-lieutenant in his Sunday uniform, in which he looked very fine; and we others. Herr Weigelt had on a coat of wondrous shape, it is true, and Augusta had made his white necktie a little too blue—for she washes the small things in a hand-basin—but he was so utterly happy and smiled away so pleasantly to himself, that his outward appearance did not seem to matter. And he hadn't, of course, as much money to spend on it as some people.

Uncle Fritz, on the other hand, was spruce from top to toe; his tail-coat of the latest fashion, and patent leather boots on for the first time. He had not put himself to so much expense either for me or for the newly married couple; he did the grand only to make a good impression upon the young lady who sat next to him at table. And she, Erica, was behaving as if the announcement of their engagement had already been secretly printed. Every time any one struck his glass to make way for speech, a deadly fear came over me that I might hear some such words as: "We have now to proclaim a happy event!"—the bit I happened to have in my mouth at the moment tasted like gall.



Yet there was another engagement I would gladly have heard announced, but there was no chance of it. I had sent Herr Felix an express invitation in a very long letter, but he declined nevertheless. I could not account for this. Could he be vexed that I should have seen him at the Bock in not exactly the best of company? Yet why should not a young man go to the Bock once in a way? Had we not been there ourselves?—When I told Betti of Herr Felix having declined my invitation she did not, indeed, say anything, but I noticed her change colour, and become pale, deadly pale, which quite frightened me. Still she recovered herself almost directly, and attempted to smile. But she went off to her own room and busied herself among her possessions, and then returned looking as usual.—What can be the matter with him? He can't despise me, surely, for having left that music-hall without being conscious of what I was doing.

I had given Betti Herr Kleines to sit next to at dinner, and she apparently got on very well with him. She told me afterwards that she had not understood half of the jokes he made; some had been utterly unintelligible to her, and others he had gulped down with his food—there are people who try to tell stories with their mouths full.

A number of very good speeches were made, both serious and merry, and others that were nothing at all, because the speakers always wandered from the point they were aiming at. Dr. Faber, who spoke in the name of his colleagues, ended his speech by saying that they all hoped Dr. Wrenzchen would not forget his old friends in his newly found happiness, and referred specially to their pleasant scientific evening-meetings.—Dr. Wrenzchen replied and promised always greatly to value the friendships he had made at school

and the University ; and added that he felt sure his wife would be glad to see him furthering the interests of science in the company of his colleagues.—And this he coolly proclaimed before all the assembled guests.—I know what that science is.—*Skat*,—that's its name ! But this comes of school and University doings. Will his good testimonials make Emmi happy when he goes off to a restaurant, and she is left alone at home?—Never !

In between the speeches glees were sung that had been specially written for the occasion. A cultivated man has no difficulty whatever in writing verses if only he has the time. One song, however, which Herr Kleines presumed to address to the bridesmaids, surpassed all conception. The young ladies who associate with my daughters belong, every one of them, to families of good standing, and to them he had the impudence to address such words as :

“ Beauty is for love's revealing,  
Brows must wear no sombre gloom ;  
Yearning for the tender feeling,  
Maidens ne'er should be concealing,  
While its youthful roses bloom.”

Fortunately his rhymes could not be made to go to any tune. My Carl rose and said the verses seemed too difficult, and had better be left ; this remark seemed to lift a perfect millstone from my heart. After dinner, however, I gave Herr Kleines a bit of my mind, and told him he might concoct as many verses as he pleased for the newspapers, but that his compositions were utterly unsuitable for family use.

I was glad when the dinner was over, and there was no longer any fear of Fritz's engagement being announced. While the table was being cleared, we had

coffee in the adjoining room, and then the dancing commenced.

The ball was opened by Emmi and Dr. Wrenzchen, then came the eleven doctors, with the bridesmaids and other young ladies. Uncle Fritz had arranged this because, as he said, he wanted to see a dozen doctors dancing one after the other. Truly it was a sight rarely to be seen!

We elderly folk, of course, took part in the dancing also. My Carl and I danced a solemn valse in remembrance of our own wedding-day.—“Carl,” said I, “we have both become a little weightier than we were then.”—“Yet as happy as ever,” he replied. I was silent. Could I tell him of all my sorrow? No, it would have been cruel. “Woman,” thought I, “is born to suffer and to endure.”

It must be admitted that the eleven doctors added greatly to the success of the evening. The later it got, the more they threw off the serious demeanour of the profession, and entered into the fun as if they had been a set of merry students. How well, too, they understood how to amuse the ladies! But a learned man always understands more about the weather and the theatre. And they were all such good dancers too; I had to have a duty-dance with every one of them.

When the night was pretty well advanced, the doctor wanted to be off.—“Emmi is enjoying herself so,” said I, and begged him to remain, at least till the cotillon was finished. Every moment was precious to me on account of the airing of the room; and he gave way.

Then, however, came Herr Weigelt's mishap. He cannot stand anything, it is true, but why need he always be asking the prettiest young girls to dance with him? And so it happened that he fell rather awkwardly with the Police-lieutenant's daughter Mila, and was re-

buked by her father. He did not take the reprimand quietly, but made all sorts of remarks, and then danced off again. Later, when he showed himself rather affectionate towards Erica, Uncle Fritz took him by the arm and led him away to the gentlemen's room, where there was good red wine, punch and a special brew. What they did with the unfortunate creature I don't know, but certainly he was in a pitiable state when Augusta, in her anxiety, fetched me to him. He had collapsed altogether, and was calling himself an unnatural father to have left his child at home to join in such revelry. He declared they had better bury him at once, and asked Augusta if she could forgive him. Thank God, there were eleven doctors at hand! The one prescribed ice, the other black coffee, the third a glass of beer, the fourth sal-volatile, and the fifth something else. But Herr Weigelt would not let any one of them go near him. In her despair, Augusta went and dragged in my son-in-law, and Weigelt seemed willing to trust him. When Dr. Wrenzchen wanted to be off again, Weigelt whimpered and implored him to stay, and caught tight hold of him. It had become high time for the young couple to leave, for several of the guests had already taken their departure. What was to be done?

Yet what is my son-in-law a doctor for, and what are the eleven other doctors for?—"Has any one of my colleagues a morphia-syringe by him?" asked Dr. Wrenzchen. Luckily half-a-dozen were at hand. Thereupon Herr Weigelt was operated upon, and ten minutes afterwards he was so totally unconscious that he could be transported home, by cab, like a helpless parcel, accompanied by two doctors. It must be a horrible sight to have any one brought home in such a condition.

When the young couple left, morning was already beginning to dawn, for they were almost the last to leave. Carl declared, that night, as he was settling to sleep, that the wedding had been a very jolly one.—Jolly indeed! Perhaps for some people, but not for me. I saw the sun rise before falling into a kind of doze, which, however, did not last long, for anxiety woke me up again pretty speedily.

At about nine o'clock, next morning, I started off to Emmi. It was impossible for me to stay at home any longer, for I had the feeling that something dreadful had happened. And so there had. My presentiments have never deceived me yet!

I rang the bell, and when the servant-girl opened the door I saw at once that something was wrong; for when I asked her whether I could see her master and mistress, she replied in a long-drawn—"Oh, yes. Frau Doctorin is upstairs." Alone, thought I, as I went up. How horrified I was when I saw the child. My goodness! There she sat on the sofa, still in her ball-dress, crying; it was enough to break one's heart to look at her. "My child!—Emmi!" I cried—"whatever is the matter?"—"Oh, Mamma, I am the most miserable creature in the world!"—"What! Has he been striking you?"—"Who?"—"Who, but your husband, the hypocrite!"—"Mamma, not a word against Franz; he is goodness itself. Anything you say to offend him is to offend me." She said this in a very determined way and ceased crying. "But, child, tell me what's the matter!"—"It's all your fault and yours only," she exclaimed. "What next, I wonder! My fault! Mine! what have I done? Is this all the thanks I get for decorating your house so poetically?"—"I know you did not mean any harm," said Emmi reproachfully, "but why did you pour orange-blossom scent over every-

thing?"—"Come, tell me all about it—what did he say?"—"When we came in last night he was delighted with the flowers on the staircase, and took me by the hand and led me into the sitting-room. 'This is to be our home, my dear little wife. Happiness has stepped over the threshold with us, and we shall manage that it remains with us always.' He drew me towards him and kissed me. Suddenly, however, he asked: 'Where can that odious smell of orange-blossom come from?' We looked about, but could not find out whence it came. At last he discovered that the smell came from the palms in the bedroom."—"Was he angry?"—"He merely said that you had, no doubt, meant it kindly, but that the plants must be moved."—"So you called the servant?"—"Of course not; we didn't want her. She would only have made us feel uncomfortable. I helped him, and we dragged the pots out into the corridor. It was very funny, and we had our laugh over it. When we had got them all out, he said it was very nice to have a wife who wasn't afraid to work for. . . ."—"Well, and what then?"—"There was a ring at the door-bell, and he had to go off to a patient who was seriously ill."—"Well, I hadn't anything to do with that."—"He called out as he went away: 'I shall be back as soon as possible.' And I called out to him: 'I will wait up for you.' And I waited and waited, but he did not come; I walked up and down, but he did not come; I looked out of his study window for him, but he did not come; I sat down, but still he did not come. I began to cry, but checked myself by thinking of the beautiful words the clergyman had said about a doctor's profession. I determined to be a true doctor's wife, but it was difficult beyond all measure. In order to take my thoughts away from myself I took up a book and turned over the pages."—"One of his

books?"—"Yes, that large one there; and I opened it at a picture of a mutilated human body, and screamed aloud in my horror."—"I had told him that he ought to have those abominable books carried up to the loft!"—"I began to feel terrified at being alone with those books. Oh, you cannot think what I felt like!"—"You poor child! This is really dreadful!"—"At half-past six he sent for his instruments, with a message for me that he would have to perform an operation when the time came. And he has never yet come back." And with this she again burst into tears.

After some time I succeeded in consoling her. I helped her to take off her dress and persuaded her to lie down a little, and as youth cannot do without sleep she was soon slumbering.

When she was fast asleep I slipped out of the room, and then examined the bell-pull of the night-bell. It was an ordinary piece of wire. "There is no use waiting till the doctor comes in," thought I; "there would only be a scene again about his not having agreed to a wedding-trip, and about his abominable books." So I took my departure.

Before I left, however, I fetched a pair of scissors from Emmi's work-table, and snipped the wire of the night-bell right through, just below the front door.

"Now, let them ring!" said I to myself.

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#### AFTER THE WEDDING.

VEXATION and blows will come in spite of everything; you may do what you like, you seem born to get them.

That the Police-lieutenant's wife should have declared it to have been very pretentious on our part, having the wedding-feast at the *Englisches Haus*, I could

easily forgive ; for, confidentially speaking, she comes of humble circumstances. But for her to have maintained that there was more seltzer-water than champagne in our punch-bowl is a downright untruth. Everything we had was of the best ; when I give anything I give it good. She might any day see the bills if she chose. I should like to know, too, how we could have managed to put eleven doctors in such good spirits with seltzer-water ?

Yet this is the smallest part of the matter ; my great vexation was caused by Frau Krause, and a greater one still by Uncle Fritz.

I had refused to allow Frau Krause to bring her boy Eduard to the wedding-party, as marriages are in no way for children. However, to show her that I wasn't as bad as she imagined, I asked her to send Eduard in the following day to have some of the cakes and good things that had been left over from the luncheon.

If she had had a vestige of tact, she would have said : "Many thanks for your kindness, but I could not think of troubling you with the boy the day after the wedding."—Not she, however ; it never occurred to her to say anything of the sort !

So Eduard came. Betti was not in the least disposed to devote herself to the boy, so I had to look after him ; and as boys of his age are more voracious than young wolves, I took care that he had something to munch at.

He did truly enjoy what was set before him—chocolate, and tart, and a whole plateful of small cakes, that might have served us for many a long day. When he had finished, I said : "Shall Auntie cut you a nice large piece of bread-and-butter ?"—"No," he answered, "I don't like bread-and-butter."—"Shall Auntie give you another cup of chocolate, then ?"—"You aren't my auntie at all," said he with a sneer.—"But you've



always called me Auntie.”—“Yes, when I was little,” he replied; “but Mamma has forbidden me to call any one Auntie; she says it’s only horrid, little, stupid children that do it. But——” He suddenly stopped. “Ha! ha!” thought I, “there’s something in this; and so said coaxingly: “Well, but what, Eduard?”—“You might be my auntie if there was a marriage; and I should go to that one.”—“Marriage? Whose marriage?”—He laughed. “Come, Eddy, tell me whose?”—“Eh, how stupid you are—you don’t know!”—“Tell me; I won’t say anything.”—“Eh, how inquisitive you are! Now I shan’t tell you anything.”—And the young rascal grinned at me so horribly that I felt my fingers tingle.—But the thought flashed through my mind: “Don’t be in too great a hurry, Wilhelmine.” I was resolved to get at the bottom of the matter, and to find out whether they had really got Fritz to fall into their trap. And he such a pleasant, cultivated man in the prime of life—a man who might have made the very best of marriages! “Eddy, dear,” said I, “do you like raspberry jelly?”—“You wouldn’t give me any if I did,” answered he.—“You shall have some, indeed.”—“But I won’t tell you anything, remember.”—If I had followed my natural promptings, I would have bared that boy’s back; it would have been the right thing for him. Yet, having made up my mind to know more about Fritz, I rose and fetched the raspberry jelly. It had been standing more than a year as it was.

“Tell me,” said I in an off-hand way, “does Uncle Fritz often come to your house?”—“He was there only the other day.”—“Did he stay long?”—“I don’t know.”—“Are you glad when he comes?”—“No, he is always horrid to me.”—“That’s not right of him; but your father likes his coming, doesn’t he?”—“Papa

likes what Mamma wants."—"And Auntie Erica, what does she say?"—"She has always to put on her best frock."—"Are you very fond of Auntie Erica?"—"Yes, if I may go to her wedding."—"I'll manage that you go."—"I don't believe you, for you wouldn't let me come to Emmi's. Mamma told me you wouldn't."—"Is there a lot of talk about the wedding already?"—"I don't know."—He had meanwhile finished and licked up the last of his jelly.

"You know quite well, Eduard; but just you tell your Mamma, in the first place, that Uncle Fritz is not thinking about getting married yet; and secondly, that she shouldn't gossip about weddings that will never come off. Uncle Fritz makes himself pleasant to every lady he meets, without directly thinking of getting married. And now I think you have had more than enough, and had better be off home again."

It was a perfect relief to my mind when that young scamp was out of the house. He never as much as said thank you for what I had given him; but what can be expected from such training as he gets, where the father is a nonentity, and the mother allows the boy to do as he pleases!

Scarcely half an hour afterwards Frau Krause came tramping in. The very way she rang the front door-bell was enough to make one fancy that Berlin was coming to an end.

She said she wouldn't stay more than a minute, but that she must have a word with me. "Pray take a chair," said I; and then out she came with it: she had always thought well of me, but she certainly did not consider it very nice of me to invite other people's children to question them about family concerns. Any one might know what went on in her house, but she would refuse to take any such messages as had been sent to

her through her boy.—I let her talk herself out, for, in fact, I couldn't get a word in ; she rattled on like a shuttle in a sewing-machine. "Dear Frau Krause," I then said, "no one would wish to lay down the law for other people ; but still you cannot wonder at my not caring to see any one wanting to entrap my brother into marrying the person they want him to marry."—She maintained that there had been no talk of such a thing, and that it was no business of mine what dresses her visitor chose to wear.

"Have I meddled in any such thing?"—"Yes, you, my dear. Eduard repeated all that passed between you ; the child has a wonderful memory."—"The child has told stories ; I could never have said anything of the kind. It was he himself that told me about the dress," I cried angrily ; "I knew nothing about it."—"An innocent child like that would never dream of saying such a thing."—"Do you mean to say that I tell falsehoods?"—"No, I do not say that . . . but still you gave the child raspberry jelly, put prying questions, and told him I do not know what ; and my Cousin Erica has been made utterly miserable. You have set people talking about her and your brother Fritz, and it is now his bounden duty to marry the girl."

I felt dumbfounded and had to draw up my breath once or twice before I could utter a word. "What ? I ? No, my dear, it's you that want to make the match. It's what you have been driving at."—"No such thing."—"Then why does Eduard speak about it?"—"Heaven only knows what you have got that innocent child to say!"—"He told me of his own accord that he was to be at the wedding when Erica and Uncle Fritz—"

"Re—all—y ?" and her "really" was drawn out as long as the *Chaussée Strasse* and the *Müller Strasse* put together ; then she added : "You have misunderstood

things a little, my dear ; the boy wanted so much to go to Emmi's wedding ; but, as you positively refused to have him, I consoled him by saying that he should go to Erica's wedding when she got married."—"And whom was she to marry, pray?"—"It didn't matter who—my only object was to pacify Eduard. Names were never mentioned ; *you* perhaps put some name on the child's tongue for him ; we are far too cautious in such matters."

"Yet Eduard said he knew all about it, only he wouldn't say what."—"Do you not know children's ways better than that ? How often the little dears say for fun, 'I know something you don't know,' and afterwards it turns out they know nothing at all. Eduard is always full of fun. Children's speeches, my dear, are not to be relied upon, so there was no necessity for you to send me such good advice by the little fellow. And, as regards my cousin, your brother will, no doubt, act honourably by her. I shall have a talk with him on the subject ;" and then, smiling sweetly, she took her departure.

I must now tell you of the scene I had that same evening with Uncle Fritz. Frau Krause had been to him—had flown to him on purpose—and he came to me in a pretty state of mind. Outwardly he seemed tolerably composed, but his eyebrows were drawn close together. It was clear that he was growling inwardly, and not in a very mild fashion either. "What do you think, Wilhelmine, about my making her a proposal without further ado ? I have been paying her some attention, I admit, but in no way bound myself to anything, but the case is different now."—"So you consider her presentable?"—"More than that ; but still I had no thought of marrying her."—"Well, and now?"—"Frau Krause says that Erica has been made miser-

able by being talked about ; her feelings have been hurt, Wilhelmine. Can I stand by and see that ?"—“Have you gone and judged for yourself ?”—“No ; but Frau Krause told me about Erica.”—“But she tells lies.”—“Wilhelmine !”—“Oh, take her part if you like ; the whole lot of them tell lies—she, her horrid boy, his father—no, not him, he is a night-watchman.”—“And Erica, too, I suppose ?”—“Fritz, do me the favour not to speak of her in such a familiar way. Think of your future ; she hasn't a penny.”

“I earn more than she and I need together.”

“Fritz, you don't mean to say you are seriously thinking of—of——”—“Not a word more, Wilhelmine. I am independent and shall do as I like—Bye, bye !”

And away he went.

The following day I expected to receive the news of Fritz's engagement ; instead of this I learned that Erica had suddenly packed up her goods and chattels and gone home. Who can put two and two together there ? When I asked Uncle Fritz about it he answered me with a cold smile : “Give me some raspberry jelly and I'll tell you all about it.”—This coming winter I mean to get up some private theatricals, and shall manage that he forgets all about that heather-bell.

As I said to begin with, one is never free from troubles either before or after a wedding.

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### THE FIRST PARTY.

It is very natural that after a young married couple have talked themselves out a little, that they should set about forming a social circle in order that some little variety may break the monotony of their existence, which from day to day is pretty much the same sort of

tune. What, moreover, would have been the use of re-furnishing the house—the expanding dining-table, the complete dinner-service in onion-pattern, the fine tablecloths and the twelve Renaissance chairs, with real Gothic backs—if they didn't mean to show them to people?—The doctor and Emmi can't surely be expected to shuffle about on all the dozen chairs; moreover, it's a perfect martyrdom to sit upon them with their straight backs, and one feels the consequences in one's own back for three days afterwards. But that doctor would have nothing else.

I am not in the least boastful, but I may say that Emmi has had an education that she needn't be ashamed of. At school she got an insight into the realm of the ideal through the classic writers, and learned botany and drawing also; lessons in fine needlework she had from the widow of an Imperial Councillor, and at home she was taught practical things. And I fancy the *rissoles* I taught her to make the doctor will not need to call improper food. My Carl always likes them, and they have to be mixed with bread.

Party-giving, however, requires some experience, and so I considered it my duty to stand by my child with help and advice, for, although the doctor is indifferent to what other people think, I am not going to have it said afterwards that the party wanted style.

First of all, it had to be considered who were to be invited. We reckoned that there were twenty-two persons whom it would be absolutely necessary to ask, yet that couldn't be done, for there were only twelve chairs, so the doctor determined to divide them into two sets, and to have a party first for the younger lot and then one for the older people. In other words, no doubt, he meant to say: "Worthy mother-in-law, we don't mean to cook for you on this first occasion."

I replied, with the last remnant of a smile I had at my command: "Just as you think best; and there need not be so much fuss made when the younger ones are invited." He answered that he had no idea whatever of cutting things short, that there must be a respectable turnout such as the middle classes of Berlin were accustomed to, but that there was no need to do more than that. "What then do you think of having, for instance?"—"Craw-fish," said he; "they are still in first-rate condition and very cheap; most people fancy they are over in August, but Micha will let me have the best he has, for we are good acquaintances." "Very well, then, cheap craw-fish; and what then?" I asked.—"A goose," suggested Emmi.—"A goose is too expensive, and doesn't cut up well," said the doctor; "roast veal will be better, especially if there is plenty of sauce and potatoes." "A lot of potatoes is very ungenteel," I ventured to remark.—"Those who don't consider them good enough eating can leave them," replied the doctor. "And what about pudding?" I asked.—"Any sort of milky ground rice-pudding—it goes furthest," the doctor answered decisively. "Why not rather bluish Plötzensee gruel?"\* I exclaimed, by way of a little joke, in rejecting his proposal.—"That's a matter of taste," he replied. But one is never understood in that house.

When I got home my husband asked me what the result of the preparatory meeting had been. "Carl" said I, "it will be positively ridiculous, but I mean to frustrate that notion of his about the milk-sop. My daughter shall not be exposed to ridicule."

Emmi, the dear unsuspecting creature, was perfectly delighted at the thought of giving her first party, and

\* Plötzensee is a prison—hence Frau Buchholz ironically suggests prison fare.

was therefore willing to agree to anything he wished, for when I said to her that she must at all events order some kind of tart, she replied that she had already made some pastry by way of trial, and that her husband had thought it excellent, especially as the whole dishful only cost eightpence. "Does that include the eggs?" I asked. Her reply was that pastry could be made quite well without eggs. There is no possibility of altering matters there.

Full of anxiety, therefore, I awaited the day of the party. My Carl and I, and Betti, were invited: the doctor had shown proper feeling enough not to pass over his wife's relatives. Then there were the Weigelts, Dr. Faber, Herr Lehmann and his wife, Herr Kleines and Fräulein Kulecke. The twelve chairs were all occupied.

"Why in all the world did you ask the Weigelts?" I asked Emmi, when I was helping her to lay the cloth in the afternoon. "He is somewhat of a bore, it is true," she replied; "but Franz thinks he plays *skat* very well." "*Skat!*" I exclaimed, horrified. "Well, yes," said Emmi, "there are just exactly the right number for two sets."—"And what are we ladies to do while the gentlemen have neither eyes nor ears for anything but their detestable game?"—"He asked Amanda Kulecke, that she might recite something to us—she has a wonderful voice."—"Just like a sergeant's," said I bitterly.

At eight o'clock the first guests arrived; of course we Buchholzes had come a little earlier, in order to do the honours if necessary. It cannot be denied that the rooms looked splendid.

Everything was new and as it ought to be. There was green in front of the windows, a basket of flowers on the table before the sofa; the lamps were bright



and cheerful, and Emmi, looking charming, although a little timid, awaiting her guests.

The Weigelts, in a somewhat ungentee fashion, came in just as the clock struck the hour. Emmi embraced Augusta very heartily, and Herr Weigelt said a few words about their having considered themselves highly honoured in receiving an invitation. Of course he again had on a necktie such as not a creature ever wears nowadays. Then came Fräulein Kulecke, who, in her deep voice, remarked that the rooms looked exceedingly poetic; she was followed by Dr. Paber, who always has a few friendly words for me, and said that he found me looking wonderfully younger and brighter than when he last saw me.

Herr Lehmann, a lawyer, and one of Dr. Wrenzchen's most intimate friends, had squeezed himself into a dress-coat, while the other gentlemen wore frock-coats; this induced the doctor to make some jokes at his expense, which seemed to make Herr Lehmann feel more uncomfortable than he had been on first coming in. His wife did not speak much either.

Herr Kleines came last, and had on a pair of ruddy-brown gloves, and thus looked for all the world as if he had just come from a slaughter-house. Heaven only knows what sort of people he means to astonish by such outward arrangements!

"Now," said I to Emmi, "we'd better put on the craw-fish; the young people have all come. You stay here with your guests."

"Are these all the craw-fish you have?" said I to the girl in the kitchen.—"Yes, ma'am."—"There's not enough to go round," said I.—"There's roast meat and pudding also."—"Where's the pudding?"—"In the larder."—I took a light and went in to look.—Yes, there stood the three dishes with the milk-sop. I tasted it,

and found neither substance nor flavour about it, one might as well have hung one's tongue out of the window.—“Well,” thought I, “it's the doctor's will, of course.”

As I stood there shaking my head at those three wretched bowls, I heard a scraping, shuffling noise near me. “What's this?” thought I, and looked about. The noise came from a basket below the table. What should I find on taking off the lid, but—craw-fish! And such ones, regular monsters!

“There are more craw-fish,” I cried indignantly on returning to the kitchen, “and you tell me those are all you've got!”—“Those mayn't be touched, ma'am; the doctor picked them out himself for to-morrow. He's going to have them for breakfast.”—“The guests have got to be considered first,” I replied, and was about to throw the craw-fish I had discovered into the pan, when the impertinent girl planted herself right in front of the fire, and cried: “I'll not let anybody to the fire, even though it were the devil's own mother-in-law!”—“We'll see about that,” said I, and went to fetch Emmi.—I could see well enough that it was the doctor, speaking out of that girl; but such a creature should be taught better, Emmi should stand by her mother. Emmi came at once when I called her.—“Child,” said I, when we were in the passage, “your cook has insulted me beyond conception; either she begs my pardon on her knees, or I leave your house on the spot.”—“Mamma, what has happened?”—I explained what had occurred.—“Mamma, surely you must have provoked her.”—“Do you mean to take that wretched girl's part?”—“She has never yet given us cause to find fault with her.”—“You must at once give her notice to leave.”—“Mamma, that's impossible, she is so reliable and we are quite satisfied with her.”—“So

you mean to sacrifice your own mother for that disreputable creature? Very well!"

At this moment the doctor appeared; he had wondered why the craw-fish had been so long in being got ready, and they were not in the pan yet.—"Doctor," said I with dignity, "you will surely not have me insulted in your house?"—"I?—not likely," he replied; "come away into the sitting-room, not a soul shall harm you!"—Did he think such a phrase was sufficient to heal the wounds which that wretch of a cook had given me? I considered it my duty to tell him all that had happened—how I had heard the craw-fish shuffling about in the basket, and how the impudent girl had told me a bare-faced untruth; how I had been bound to show my indignation; how she had prevented me approaching the fire, and what insulting remarks she had thrown at me. And he, what did he say to it all?—"That's only external, dear mother-in-law. Don't be too sensitive, but come away in."—"No," I cried; "either that girl goes, or I go!"—Emmi stood there bewildered and not knowing what to do, and the doctor did his best to console her; and away in the kitchen was that fury of a cook making such a clatter with the coal-shovel and the dishes, one might have fancied some savage creature had got in among them.—"Just listen to the noise she is making," I cried, "and you keep her in your house? That is pretty discipline!"

Carl now came to see what was detaining us. "It is already nine o'clock," he exclaimed, "and we are all hungry!"—I told him what had happened, what the cook had said to me, what Emmi had said, what the doctor had said, and what I had said, and wound up by saying: "Here I do not intend to remain."—Carl deliberated a moment, and then said quietly: "Wilhelmine, do not spoil the young couple's first party. Do

not interfere with their affairs. You know well enough that in the early days of our marriage, things did not go as smoothly as they did later on. We are among friends here who think less about finding all the arrangements perfect, than that they get a hearty welcome."—"And that the largest craw-fish are kept for the next day's breakfast!" I cried.—"Wilhelmine, remember that we are guests here! I beseech you to behave in a friendly way."—He took my arm in his and led me back into the room where the guests were assembled.—Emmi went off to the kitchen.

The tone that prevailed in the room seemed more befitting a funeral than an evening-party; even the jokes which Herr Kleines made, for the entertainment of the guests, met only with a polite kind of approval. No one laughed aloud at his jokes but himself. All were, of course, more or less hungry; for people like the Weigelts take less than usual at their midday meal when they are invited out of an evening. It was a perfect relief, therefore, when Emmi came in and announced that supper was ready.

The doctor took in Frau Lehmann, Herr Lehmann Frau Weigelt, Herr Kleines my Betti, Carl Emmi, Herr Weigelt Amanda Kulecke, and Dr. Paber me.

The few craw-fish were soon finished. Emmi ate one; I did not take any, so that there might be more for the guests. Dr. Wrenzchen, however, did not stint himself, and declared them to be of excellent flavour.

"They are probably the very last of the season, Franz," said Dr. Paber, when I pressed him to help himself to another from the dish, which had come round again as good as empty. "They may be, Paber," replied the doctor; they are, of course, not as plentiful now as in summer. One good thing is, that one is not likely to overload oneself, and can enjoy what follows."

"It is certainly better not to take too many," returned Dr. Paber.—"Oh," said I, "some people eat a quantity for breakfast. Dr. Paber and Emmi's husband both doubted the accuracy of my remark. But I knew what I knew. The hypocrite!

Then came the roast veal. Emmi might have told him that none of her family cared for veal, although it may be an elixir to his stomach.—The roast was better than I expected it to be; but there was too much sauce, and it was too thin. Yet they keep a cook like that! Dr. Paber proposed the first toast—that is, after Dr. Wrenzchen in the customary way had addressed a few words of welcome to his guests. Dr. Paber speaks very well, but he was not quite up to his subject, for he wished the young household a continuance of the happiness and peace which had hitherto prevailed.—I joined in drinking to their happiness, of course, for I am not an unnatural mother; still, I could not help inwardly smiling contemptuously at the "peace" that Dr. Paber had referred to. Peace, indeed, with such a clatterer in the kitchen! Ridiculous!

Herr Kleines then made a speech in rhyme; every one got a couplet. To me he addressed the lines:

"Mothers-in-law are often *Fluchholz*,  
Excepting, of course, Frau *Buchholz*." \*

All laughed at this except Herr Weigelt and I. He didn't because his mouth happened to be full of potatoes at the moment, and I didn't because I felt annoyed. There's no such word at all in German as *Fluchholz*, and it was invented only as a bit of malice and for the

\* This, as will be seen at once, is a play upon the word *Buchholz*, which, being literally translated, means beech-wood. The word *Fluchholz*, literally *curse-wood*, Herr Kleines invented to serve his purpose both for rhyme and a hit at mothers-in-law.

sake of rhyme. Is poetry to be used to cause unpleasantness to one's fellow-creatures? Did Lessing ever do anything of the kind? No, he was tolerant. If Herr Kleines had made some such rhyme for the girl Rieke in the kitchen, I should not have minded, and he would probably have received a pretty substantial reward from her for his poetic effusion. I had to sit still and suffer.

That the ground rice-pap was specially distasteful to me in this state of mind may easily be imagined. Herr Kleines, however, ate of it like a veritable German poet, whose hunger-belt—as Dr. Paber admirably remarked—had been loosened. Dr. Paber's masculine organ of taste, of course, refused to be pleased with the sloppy pap. "The stuff tastes of that Nothing out of which the world was created," said I.—"That is just what I think too," he replied, "but did not venture to say so."—In fact, I must say Dr. Paber is a very observant and cultivated man; and if Betti were to take his fancy, I might not exactly encourage him, but should, at least, not put any obstacle in his way.—Those who hadn't had enough supper could make up the deficiency with bread-and-butter and the cow's cheese, which was already somewhat high. However offensive the smell may be to the olfactory nerves of other people, the doctor can't do without it.

This meal, like everything else, came to an end at last—but not the milk-sop—there was enough left for a peasant's wedding-feast, where the eating and drinking is known to go on for three whole days.

After supper the gentlemen went to their card-tables, and we ladies were left to ourselves. Frau Lehmann had meanwhile thawed a little, and told us a number of delightful little anecdotes, and also knew of such amusing games with lucifer-matches—puzzling enough to

crack one's brains—that the time passed pleasantly enough.—How sad it is, thought I, that in future I shall enter this house only as a visitor, without taking off my bonnet, when dropping in, by accident, as it were.

The gentlemen seemed very eager over their games, and drank Patzenhofer beer while playing. When all the glasses stood empty, a pause was made for a general refilling, in order that no time might be lost, as Dr. Paber jocosely said. One of these pauses Amanda Kulecke made use of for her recitation, so that the gentlemen might pay some attention to her performance—the fact being that she had long since become jealous of merry little Frau Lehmann.

Amanda took up her position at the door connecting the two rooms, and then began forthwith. We all felt our flesh creep as we sat there, for the poem opens with a young soldier being killed, and then, all reeking with blood, he appears to his betrothed as a ghost, and tells her that, if she weeps any more tears of blood, his coffin will be deluged in blood, and he drowned in it without a chance of escape. Herr Kleines quickly put on one of his ruddy-brown gloves, and, without Amanda observing him, put his hand round the corner of the door; this gave Augusta Weigelt such a fright that she turned pale with terror, especially as Amanda, with her deep voice, imitated the sepulchral tones in a horribly realistic manner. The gentlemen gave her vigorous but brief applause, and then speedily resumed their play.

The recitation completely put an end to Frau Lehmann's merriment and to ours also, if, indeed, I can speak of merriment in my own case. So we thanked Heaven when the last games were announced. The doctor had been one of the winners, and gave his gains to Emmi—as he always does—and she put the money

into a box for future use. He does this, of course, only to please her, after having spent a whole evening up to midnight with his *skat*-friends. If I were in Emmi's place . . . but what's the good of my giving good advice?—they only want to get rid of me in that house.

At about two o'clock we all left. The servant-girl was standing at the front door holding a light, but also with a view of receiving gratuities from the guests for what they had received. I walked haughtily past that kitchen-fury without giving her as much as a glance. She shall learn what comes of rebelling against a mother when her child gives her first party. A pretty state of things!

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#### UNCLE FRITZ'S CHRISTMAS.

You are sure to have wondered why Uncle Fritz was not one of the guests at Dr. Wrenzchen's first party, as their being such constant companions at the *skat*-tables had bound the two very closely together; however, there were good reasons why he did not come in for any of the *craw-fish*. Uncle Fritz was, in fact, away from home.

There is nothing whatever surprising in a tradesman having to set out on a journey, especially when Christmas has come round again and country customers require the latest novelties to be set before them, novelties which Berlin indeed has for more than a year regarded as belonging to a period of the past. Berlin must nowadays have everything in style; some people who can afford it keep an architect of their own, whom they consult before making any purchase, and who refers to his books on art in doubtful cases. I am anxious to see how long it will be before fashion demands



that the father of a family shall wear a suit of iron armour instead of a house coat, so as to be in keeping with his furniture. And what is a tradesman to do with articles which have not managed to retain a stylish appearance? He must away with them to places where art culture has not run to seed, and where folk can manage to exist without spittoons of polished brass. Uncle Fritz's having gone away was not in any way unusual, and his zeal in business affairs could only be admired; for activity is the best antidote against thoughtlessness. Still, one is sometimes deceived.

I had hoped the Erica-affair was settled once and for ever. Frau Krause had certainly wished to drive Fritz into an engagement with her cousin; but when she held the marriage-revolver at their breasts, Erica fled off home deeply offended, which I considered very praiseworthy of her.

Uncle Fritz too seemed content, at least he did not allow us to notice anything to the contrary. But I soon learned that matters were not at all as they should have been.

When Fritz returned home he was altogether changed, so that my Carl thought he must have sustained some great loss. But, as we found out, not only was money coming in very well, but he had come back with a number of splendid orders. How, then, were we to explain his downcast looks? "Carl," said I to my husband, "depend upon it, it's love. You just ask him in an off-hand way, what places he has visited, and leave the rest to me." Carl replied that he never interfered with other people's private concerns; whereupon I could not help making the remark, that it was the duty of every one to look a little after his neighbour's welfare. But Carl declared that Fritz would bristle up if he

thought that any one were prying into his affairs. I had unfortunately to admit Carl right there. A cunning idea flashed across my mind: "Wilhelmine, you'd better go to Frau Krause yourself, and can take the opportunity of putting on your new winter mantle. That will stir up her resentment, and when jealousy seizes her she will out with all the malice at her command. Something has happened, and nothing very good either. If she knows of it, she'll soon let it slip out."

So off I went to Frau Krause, little as I am disposed to like her. At first she did not let me notice anything, but bit by bit I turned the conversation on to Uncle Fritz, saying that he seemed to be doing an excellent business, and would soon have to be thinking of getting married. I added that he need not be at a loss, as he was a favourite everywhere. "Indeed;" said she, "there are families, I fancy, who think differently!"—"It's more than I know then."—"May be, for it seems he hasn't told you about the refusal he got when away on his travels."—"You are mistaken, my dear," said I. "Not at all, ask him yourself what Erica's parents and relatives think of him. It is a positive mercy the girl did not act thoughtlessly when she was visiting us." I replied to this that Uncle Fritz had never any serious intention of making that little insignificant person an offer of marriage. "Then why did he go to Lingen?" she exclaimed triumphantly. "His business takes him all over the country," I replied. I had learned enough and, therefore, cut my visit short, but did not ask Frau Krause to come and see me soon.

The following Sunday Uncle Fritz came to dinner. When Carl had retired for a snooze, and Betti had gone off, with her Christmas work, to the Police-lieutenant's house, I was left alone with Fritz. He did not seem,

however, to have anything to say for himself, and I did not care to be the first to begin. He took up a newspaper, and I pretended to look out of the window, although I was really watching him, and the clock kept ticking away quietly.

When I saw him beginning the advertisement sheet for a second time, I felt I could no longer stand the painful state of affairs. "Fritz," said I, "tell me what ails you. You surely know that you can safely confide anything to me. Why are you so grumpy and glum?"—"Because I am out of spirits," he replied; "I'll be all right again in time." "But why are you out of spirits? Why do you not speak? What happened to you in Lingen?" He rose hurriedly at this remark of mine, and exclaimed: "What do you know about my having been in Lingen?"—"Only what Frau Krause told me."—"Frau Krause is an old chatter-box!"—"I know that well enough. But what makes her tell me that Erica's people won't have anything to say to you?"

Fritz paced up and down the room for some time, then suddenly he stopped in front of me, and said: "What if I tell you that Frau Krause has spoken the truth."—"It would be inconceivable to me," I replied.

"Because you don't know what provincial philistines are," he replied. Thereupon he told me the whole story from beginning to end in a sensible way. He had kept his vexation so long to himself, and now felt the necessity of speaking of it.

It seems he had found it impossible to forget Erica, and had, therefore, gone to Lingen to introduce himself to her family, and to get a final yea from her. He had been received in a very friendly way at first, for when a young man introduces himself to a family who are entire strangers to him, and where there is a mar-

riageable daughter, of course every one knows his why and wherefore. He gave out, however, that he had only come on business, and on one occasion invited the father to dine with him at the *table d'hôte*. It seems that Fritz, in his usual way, found fault with the eating and condemned the wine especially, whereupon the old man remarked that he was no doubt spoiled by his life in Berlin.—Fritz said it was not exactly that, but confessed that he did like a decent glass of wine at dinner. Fritz noticed that the old man became rather silent after this, and that he watched him in a suspicious kind of way.

“He didn't like your boastful talk, that's certain,” said I.—“Possibly, but he invited me to supper again, nevertheless. In the afternoon I went to the restaurant where I had been told the best beer was to be got; I couldn't remain in my rooms at the hotel with nothing to do.”—“No doubt, then, you went to their supper a little too lively?”—“Nothing of the kind! At the restaurant a party of ‘regulars’ were sitting at a table close to mine, and they were telling each other a lot of anecdotes that were bald with age, so I made off in disgust. Hence I got to the Lünnes' house rather earlier than necessary, and upon entering heard a dreadful uproar.”—“What was the matter?”—“Two of the younger children were being made to take powders, which they were resenting. There are a perfect tribe of children. In small towns a christening seems to be the grandest of all pleasures. A grandmother also I saw for the first time—she was standing by the children pinching them to make them swallow their medicine. I was about to take my departure again, as I detest such scenes, when the father came in and proposed a walk, as the ladies were not quite ready to receive me. So away we went out of the town. The

beauties of country scenes can only be appreciated by natives. After walking for about an hour, I asked whether we should soon be coming within sight of some restaurant. You know, Wilhelmine, that I cannot endure 'dry' walking. The road must end with a glass of something, else, no such running about the country for me!"—"And what was his answer?"—"Nothing."—"And how was he afterwards at supper?"—"Tiresome to a degree. One bottle of wine only was opened. He and I and the grandmother finished it; the old lady put sugar into her glass."—"And how was Erica?"—"Perplexed, I should say; she didn't seem to know whether she might speak or not."—"And what was the conversation about?"—"About Berlin, and how corrupt everything was there. The old grandmother declared that not a day passed but what some persons were murdered in the streets, and that fidelity and faith were things not to be met with there nowadays. She thanked her God that she had never been in that slough of sin, and maintained that no one could live there without harm to his soul."—"You surely did not let such remarks pass unanswered," said I.—"I said that Fräulein Erica would know better than that."—"Oh, yes,' sneered the old grandmother, 'Erica told us that she had been at the Bock. We know Berlin better than you imagine: we are steady and temperate people here, and are therefore shy of the Berlin people. Yes, that we are! Everything is unhealthy about that city. Even the children have to be ordered by the magistrate to be bathed because they are neglected by their parents. There is no need for that to be done here, we take care that children get all they need in good time.' The bathing business I could not deny; I had seen it with my own eyes, and the mere remembrance of it made me sick at heart. I took my leave

early, and had a glass of grog at the hotel, in order to rid myself of the thoughts of powders and provincial mustiness in general."

"Fritz," said I, "this much I see already, the grandmother is against you."—"All of them are," he exclaimed, "for the next day when I asked the father whether he would give me his daughter, his reply was that after what he had heard of me in Lingen, he was sorry to say he did not think his child would be happy with me, as I seemed to prefer restaurants and good living, to an orderly and steady home life. The block-head!"

I said nothing, for I did not wish to play the merciless Samaritan and strew pepper and salt upon his reopened wounds. After a while I said: "Fritz, those people don't know Berlin manners and customs, simply because the newspapers only notice the black side of things, and never anything that is good and praiseworthy; still, it would have been wiser if you had shown yourself less thirsty."—"It wasn't worth talking about."—"To people like that, who never drink at all, it was more than sufficient. And what is that makes you always so thirsty? Your rowing and skittle clubs?"—"Wilhelmine, you'd better not talk of things you know nothing about."—"Very well," said I, "you are excited; but you can't deny that many a piece of good fortune has been whisked out of the world by a skittle-ball."—"If they were all bad shots, you may be right," he replied contemptuously.—"Did you speak to Erica again?"—"She is just like the rest; she is terrified of her grandmother. And Heaven only knows what that old woman may have put into her head."—"Is it all at an end between you then?"—"It looks like it."—"Fritz, who knows but what it may be a great blessing for you."—"Blessing! you little know how I love that girl.

I shall never marry now, never!"—"Nonsense! It's not very likely that you would be content to hang about a restaurant, stirring the mustard, till the others came in and *skat* commenced. Mark what I say!"—"You talk of things you don't understand," he replied; "and although I may have been baptised with Spree water, I wasn't brought up on it."—And then away he went.

I felt very sorry for him. He was no longer the old merry Uncle Fritz; he must have suffered. And it worried me to think that Frau Krause was right. This rowing and skittle-playing are, however, at the bottom of it all. And this is just what might be expected when we reflect that young boating-men work up their appetites, which have afterwards to be appeased in order that they may be in proper training. Innkeepers have to supply them so plentifully, that there's no getting it all on the bill of fare, and the men consider it their duty to drink expensive wines simply in order to make some return to the host. I know they do this, for they are a respectable set of young fellows. Grandmothers are ignorant of all this; indeed I have never met with a rowing grandmother!

Uncle Fritz has often invited us to the place where he dines regularly, and I can only say the young men seemed to be pleasant enough. Their behaviour was very genteel and not at all like boating-men generally: no nautical remarks, only healthy appetites, and an accurate knowledge of the wine card. It was this latter that proved the ruin of Fritz in his search for a wife. I think, however, that if Fritz's friend King had been in his place, the Lingen people would have been much more astonished, for Fritz is a mere amateur, whereas King, I am told, even rows in his sleep and hence wakes of a morning at six quite thirsty. The

old grandmother ought to have known him—and I wish she had!

But truly I was greatly grieved at Fritz's low spirits; and would rather have Erica than no one. My Carl thought so too, and would gladly have seen Uncle Fritz tied to an apron-string, for that precious husband of mine has, in the course of years, learned to value domestic happiness with me at his side.

I have seen many a Christmas, and have always rejoiced when it was at hand, but on this occasion I did not long for the day to come. But what is the use of trying to thwart the calendar? None! The festive eve came at last. We could not possibly be as cheerful as usual, for the merry old Uncle Fritz was not there. Every one felt that he was making an effort to be cheerful, and this grieved me to the heart, and so it did Carl. Emmi and her husband, who were also with us, did not trouble themselves about any one but themselves; he seems to be more in love with her now than when they were engaged—externally at least. And Emmi has not a thought except for him. Betti, I think, suspected that Uncle Fritz had some sorrow, for she did her utmost to show him little kindnesses, which is not her way at all as a rule; she seems to me to be getting more and more uncommunicative and monosyllabic. I noticed, however, that her eyes looked moist when he nodded his thanks to her. The poor girl is clearly not happy.

In my heart I wished the evening well over, and so hurried the cook a little.

But before the carps were ready the front-door bell rang, which proved to be the postman with a letter for Uncle Fritz. When he looked at the postmark he seemed quite startled, and kept staring at the letter. He then rose and hurried into the next room, evidently



to open his letter. I wanted to go in to him, but Carl caught hold of my dress and held me back. After a little while he said I might go in to Fritz if I liked now. I found him sitting beside the table holding a little sprig in his hand, upon which the full light of the lamp was shining—it was a little sprig of heather.

I went up to him quietly and put my hand gently on his shoulder, and he burst into tears.

I did and said nothing for some time ; I saw how deeply affected he was, and that he was battling with himself—the strong man against the weak heart in his breast. “Wilhelmine,” he then said, and a cheerful smile lit up his face—“Wilhelmine, look—in spite of the grandmother !”

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